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The Clue of the Whorl

A DETECTIVE STORY

BY

KATHERINE STAGG

Read "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot, in Our Next Issue!

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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THE CLUE OF THE WHORL

By KATHERINE STAGG

PROLOGUE

GORDON LAKE was playing solitaire; he called it resting, for so active a brain had this talented detective that reading only suggested all manner of new and untried methods of detecting the many crimes that are puzzling the public and police.

In his early thirties his silver-white crown of hair made him look older, until one saw the exuberant vitality in his hazel eyes, that could glow and burn with a fierce fire, and yet could look as cold as ice when the needed self-control was called into action.

Well-born, and with a comfortable income, he might have led the easy life of pleasure natural to his years, but like many of the old guard of our police force, the career of tracing crime had been irresistible to him. With most boys it simmers out before twenty, but Gordon Lake had fibre of the strongest, tenacity of purpose, and, unlike most detectives, a feeling that Fate had called him to this mode of life so strong that he might have been said to have consecrated himself to the uncoverings of wrongs and the unerring pursuit of criminals. He himself believed that to accomplish this master work was fully equal in dignity and responsibility to that of the prosecuting lawyer in any case that menaced the community.

So when Gordon Lake played solitaire and listened for the phone, there was always "a pricking of his thumbs" that presaged there would be something doing.

CHAPTER ONE

LINDA HART hurried across the avenue in the face of the driving snow. An amused smile flickered about her red lips, and she shook the

big white flakes from her, much as a dog might who looks on the storm as a special kind of frolic. Young, healthy, nineteen, and marvelously pretty in a dark gypsy fashion, Linda felt that the wide, wide world was her prey, and her new job as visiting secretary to the rich and eccentric Mrs. Lorillard Wayne might be the road to fortune, at least to independence, and that is a kind of fortune in itself when a girl is "on her own."

Mrs. Wayne had the name of being very hard to get along with, and only the day before there had been a battle royal, and all the servants had left in a body. So she had been intrusted with a key to the big bronze doors that had been imported from Italy some years before. Beautiful in themselves, they yet gave the house a grim, formidable look.

Being good-natured and rather sorry for the two elderly sisters who inhabited the great stone mansion, Linda had promised to be on hand early in order to fix them some coffee and rolls for breakfast, until a new cohort of servitors could be procured and installed.

Linda tugged at the door a moment, but it gave readily on its well-oiled hinges, and she bounded up the stairs to the large front room on the second floor where she knew the portly frame of the owner of this gloomy home would be still reposing in her massive bed.

She knocked timidly, then louder, and getting no response pushed open the door. A strange scene met her amazed eyes, albeit the gloom was such that the full meaning of it did not at once penetrate her mind.

The figure of Mrs. Wayne lay in the bed, but contorted in a most unnatural attitude that struck a cold chill to the marrow of Linda's bones—a chill that the snowstorm had not evoked, for Linda was Canadian by birth and loved the icy sting of the snow on her fresh young cheeks.

Crossing rapidly to the bed, she tried to rouse the prostrate figure. She was not dead, for the glaring eyes turned from side to side, but the whole body lay inert.

In consternation Linda reached for the electric button to summon help; then she remembered that there was no servant to summon.

Bethinking herself of Miss Lucy, the frail and timid sister of Mrs. Wayne, who had fluttered in and out occasionally during the week that she had been there, she tried to remember what room Miss Lucy was supposed to occupy, if indeed she had heard it mentioned. There was no need to search, however, for on a huge couch drawn near the fireplace huddled the little gray lady. Delicate as thread lace, she seemed but a fragment of humanity caught in some frightful storm, for, as Linda's eyes became accustomed to the dim light of the heavily curtained chamber, she saw confusion on every hand. A damask chair overturned, even the ashes of the fire had been scattered on the priceless rug, and it did not need much imagination to know that a hideous case of robbery had occurred here—hideous in the wreckage it had left in the gibbering figure on the bed.

Linda recalled having sent a nice fat check the day before to Dr. Smiley of East 60th street, and had felt amused at the appropriateness of the name, picturing him as the smooth sympathizer of elderly ladies with more money than real ailments. Luckily, she remembered the address and number, her fresh young mind being the kind that has a peculiarly retentive bent for numbers of all kinds, a faculty that she had reason to be thankful for in the strange sequence of events that were to follow.

Racing down the stairs again, for Mrs. Wayne could not abide a telephone nearer than the lower hall, she reached the dark closet which contained it, switched on the light and called up the number, Plaza 9—; no, I will not give the exact number, for Dr. Smiley would really rather forget this sinister episode of his highly social clientele.

Her incoherent, breathless message brought the doctor in a miraculously short time, as he, fortunately, lived just around the corner.

Ponderously following Linda's light feet up the carved stairway, Dr. Smiley entered the room.

A hurried examination, and he pronounced Miss Lucy dead of heart failure—the result of shock probably.

Mrs. Wayne, he said, must have had a stroke of paralysis, the right side being entirely useless, and only enough life in the left side to keep the vital functions going.

Her efforts to make herself understood, speech being entirely gone, were nothing short of ghastly; the left hand fumbled and twitched convulsively, but otherwise the poor stricken woman could not move, much less tell the tale of the brutal happenings that had brought her to such a plight. Linda's roses had paled by this time until she looked like a ghost.

After his first hurried examination the doctor turned to her abruptly, and really seemed to see her for the first time.

"A pretty bad business, young woman, and who are you, may I ask?"

"Linda Hart, sir, visiting secretary to Mrs. Wayne."

"And what do you know of this—this affair?"

"Why, nothing; I found them this way when I came, and I could see that Mrs. Wayne was alive, so I called you before I even thought of the police, but I suppose I had better call them now."

"The police! Humph! A fine mess they are making of things nowadays. Newspaper talk, a lot of paid boneheads cutting in and out of your house, and absolutely nothing done."

"But what shall I do?"

"Um! Let me think. Miss Lucy has died a natural death; I will have her removed to an undertaking establishment at once; I will send a nurse and all essentials for Mrs. Wayne, who must have absolute quiet for the least chance of even partial recovery. Where is young Wayne, the son?"

"He sailed only yesterday for Europe."

"The—— You don't say; that is bad, but I will get Seymour, their lawyer, at once, and he can take charge."

Linda hesitated a moment, then replied, her heart sinking as she did so:

"Mr. Seymour left for Palm Beach last Saturday."

"He did? Something rather too opportune about all this, I am inclined to think. Um—um! I have it. I know this family very well, and they would rather have anything than publicity, so I think my best plan is to call in a very good friend of mine—Gordon Lake—who is quite capable of ferreting this thing out. In fact, I may as well tell you that he is a private detective, and all you may know about the business and private affairs of the Wayne family had better be told him without any reservations of your own."

The doctor said this with such a baleful, meaning manner that poor Linda for the first time realized that the finding of herself alone in these awful conditions might mean peril. A shudder shook her from head to foot.

"But, truly, doctor, I know very little of their affairs; I have only been coming here about a week, and this morning——" But her voice died out in spite of her.

CHAPTER TWO

UNDER the doctor's instructions, Linda waited in full sight while he did some rapid telephoning.

Gordon Lake was his first call, and she gathered from the bits she could hear that he had been fortunate enough to find the detective at leisure. Then a hospital and an undertaking firm in quick succession—his sharp, staccato commands seemed to Linda's strained nerves to make the very instrument hum. Then a brokerage office was called for, the firm that she had heard mentioned as the one that Lorillard Wayne, 2d, was a member of, but it was too early for them as yet, and the girl could only conjecture that he had called that number to see if what she had said of Mr. Wayne's departure for Europe would be corroborated.

As Dr. Smiley stepped from the phone closet a click of a key was heard in the big bronze doors, a cheerful whistle sounded from the vestibule, the doors opened, and a young man entered as though completely at home.

The song died on his lips as he recognized the doctor.

"Good-morning, doctor. What's the matter? Anybody sick? I certainly did not expect to see you at this hour."

"Oh, you!" The doctor was clearly surprised and not too well pleased; in fact a shade of contempt was in his voice that he made no effort to conceal. "Peyton, eh? I believe that is your name; may I ask if you are in the habit of calling at this hour? And whose key is that you are using, young man?"

A light laugh answered this none too cordial question, but the fellow replied civilly enough:

"Why, the old girl gave me this key only yesterday, and asked me to look in as early as I could, as she had a lot of things she wanted me to do for her to-day."

The doctor looked him up and down, and again the tone of contempt was really offensive.

"I have understood you have a certain footing in this house as a sort of fetch-and-carry friend."

The young man smiled imperturbably.

"Yes, doctor, in comparison I must seem a lightweight to you, but each to his vocation, and if I am a sort of helper and consoler to elderly and lonely ladies—why, what's the odds? We can't all be knights of the medicine case, you know."

His gay and cheerful manner was a strange contrast to the atmosphere of tragedy that had enveloped Linda since she had entered the doors such a short time before.

Edmund Peyton was slender, fair and good-looking in a dapper, well-groomed fashion, but evidently belonged to that class of young men who usually write a little, or paint a little, or sing more than a little; who always dance and talk a good deal, ever ready to fill in at a dinner, or motor ride, or any other occasion when the convenience of his patron or patroness may require.

The type is well known in every big city, sometimes merely an idler, a lounger; occasionally a real "lounge lizard" who is wholly evil.

"Well," the doctor replied, continuing his own thought rather than answering Peyton's flippant remarks, "you may be surprised to know that your services are not to be in requisition to-day. Mrs. Wayne has attended her last party for a long time to come, probably her very last party."

"What in thunder do you mean?"

But before the doctor could or would explain a peal of the door-bell rang loudly through the house.

Linda started to open the door, although the doctor laid a restraining hand on her arm, but she was of a quick and active temperament, and the door was opened in a second. Face to face, she and Gordon Lake saw each for the first time; hazel eyes looked into those of midnight blue, and a subtle electric current seemed to pass between them.

Terse by habit, the doctor summed up the situation in a few sentences that cut as keenly and as surely as the icy air that blew in with the opening and closing of the door of the stricken house.

Without even the formality of introductions, the doctor began:

"Lake, this is something strictly in your line. The young woman here summoned me by phone

at eight-thirty this morning. On my arrival I found Miss Lucy Lorillard dead from heart failure. Mrs. Wayne is in a most precarious condition, paralyzed and unable to speak. The room is in disorder. Servants are all gone. Lol Wayne is on his way to Europe. The young woman says she got in by the use of a key they gave her yesterday. And this—this person enters at this unhappy conjunction of deplorable events with another key, which he, too, says was given him yesterday. You can take charge from now on, and I will hurry a nurse to the care of my patient."

Peyton looked as though he were going to faint. He dropped into the hall seat and exclaimed:

"Good God! Doctor, I didn't know——"

But Gordon Lake only gave him a glance, for his keen eyes had spied a draggled piece of some material which Linda held crumpled in her hand.

"Miss——" He paused.

"Linda Hart, sir," the girl murmured.

"Pardon me, but let me have that, and please tell me quietly just where you found it."

"What?" Linda spoke almost dazedly, so many emotions were battling in her young breast. "This? Why, I did not know I had brought it downstairs with me. It is only a crêpe de chine scarf that I found on Mrs. Wayne's bed, and I must have picked it up in my fright. Really I did not know I still had it."

"Kindly hand it over; this is luck; a finger-print as plain as an autograph. Evidently the work of an amateur, or there would have been no such carelessness."

With a pair of pocket shears Lake cut two squares from the silken thing after careful examination and put them carefully away in his inside pocket.

"Now, doctor," he continued, "I regret keeping you from your patients, but I must ask you to stay here a few minutes with this gentleman," smiling quizzically at Peyton. "No one must leave the house just yet. Miss Hart, will you be good enough to precede me up the stairs, show me the scene of the occurrence, and describe in detail exactly how you found everything on your arrival this morning?"

Linda had been terribly frightened by the manner of the doctor, and her reason told her that Gordon Lake had a double purpose in thus getting her testimony, and yet there was that about the man's strong face, something that emanated from his whole personality, that gave her hope and confidence.

The dim light in the upper hall shone on his singular hair, making it look like spun glass, and Linda felt her whole being vibrating in a way that was like an elixir; at the same time she could not have told whether her main sensations were of fright, or pain, or pleasure; it was thrilling, absorbing, as though life had suddenly taken her upon mighty wings and was bearing her to some unknown fate.

As she entered the fateful chamber she shuddered violently, for now she apprehended more the significance of the scene.

Gordon Lake crossed to the bed; at sight of him the rolling eyes of the unfortunate victim of the last night's awful work came to rest on his stern face. A long look passed, and she seemed to read something there of help, for a sigh escaped her lips and the left hand became more quiet.

CHAPTER THREE

GORDON LAKE lived in one of those old-fashioned houses on the east side of the Grand Central tunnel. The blocks between Park and Third avenues are a mixed lot, those nearest the park trying to be smart, with all sorts of stucco and excrescences and plants in tubs, dwarf trees, and even here and there an urn or piece of statuary. Those which have been left to their old-time plainness look much like elderly respectable ladies among the short-skirted and rouge-bedecked women who infest our streets. Many of them just as respectable as the plainly dressed sisters, but in their secret hearts flattered if the chance passerby mistakes them for the nymphs of the street they try to ape.

Here he dwelt with his mother as housekeeper. She often broached the subject of refurnishing the house and letting a floor or two in the manner so usual nowadays, known to the Realtors as "lap-dog" flats. But he would not hear of such a thing, saying all of one house was none too large for him to do his thinking in when he had a heavy problem on hand; he liked the feel of empty rooms above and about him. His mother adored him, even while she did not venture to understand him in the least, so she made herself comfortable in her own way and never interfered.

Here that night came Dr. Smiley, and was admitted to the special haunt of Lake in his working and dreaming hours.

Although the outside of his house was unchanged from its aspect of years, he had made some alterations in the interior.

The entire second floor had been thrown into one huge room, the stairs that communicated with the floors above and below being in an extension in the rear of the building.

It was truly a man's room, austere but luxuriously comfortable, with books on every subject known to science, a great fireplace, many deep chairs, and an organ in the big embrasure between the back windows.

After the doctor had been welcomed, and they had their pipes going, he turned to Lake and said:

"Well, if it is a fair question, what do you make of this Wayne affair?"

Lake smiled quietly as he replied:

"Rather soon to hazard an opinion, isn't it? But this I will say, that the criminal will not have much chance to get away with it, for the

fingerprints I secured are the most curious and the most strongly individualized that have ever come under my notice."

"You don't say. In what manner?"

"Why, right across the whorl of the finger; you, being a scientific man, know the circular lines that make the tiny map, as it were, on even the fingers of an infant, and are only more complex in that of a grown-up person. I have found in this case two lines placed in such a relation to each other that, under the magnifying-glass, they make a perfect figure seven."

"Why, that is remarkable."

"I take it they are the cicatrations of some old wound, but surely it is a bit weird, and I venture to assert that the owner of this hand will not find it a lucky seven by any means."

Lake spoke so quietly that a listener might not have realized the terrible import of the remark. But his steely glance seemed to visualize the criminal from that fateful sign that no power on earth could now blot out, for it was in the keeping of one who worked with Fate and knew every turn and tool of the wayward mind.

"The Wayne emeralds are gone, I understand, and I suppose that is the motive of the whole affair, but somehow I don't feel that even a most unexpected and brutal burglary could have caused both the death of the sister and the stroke by which Mrs. Wayne has been silenced as a witness."

"I think you are right; some more than ordinary cause of horror is accountable. I understand, too, that valuable as the emeralds are, there were a score of uncut rubies that are missing; their value is difficult to estimate, as they have a curious history in themselves, were kept a great secret, and never allowed out of the hands of the head of the family. Young Wayne told me one night when he was very drunk, and felt the need of a father confessor. I am telling you this in professional confidence, for I fancy it may have some weight in solving the mystery."

The doctor received this fact in silence, and smoked on for several minutes. Then, in a veiled sort of voice: "Do you fit the girl or young Peyton into the crime?"

Lake, too, paused an appreciable time before replying:

"I can hardly say yet; the girl is improbably mixed in it, yet I found on questioning her that she had been recommended by that queer old protegée of the Waynes, Miss Thorn, an ancient Englishwoman who does mending and odd jobs. She has known the Waynes for years, and might have had a substantial income from them, as they are generous in all their dealings, but she was of a very independent nature, and has always perferred to live on her slender earnings. She had been at the house the day before, but that is as far as I have been able to find out any facts about her."

"And how about Peyton?" The doctor's stern voice bit off the words.

"Really, doctor, I think I will have to throw back that question to you? Isn't it more in your line to have an opinion about that? I dislike to mention it, but it seems necessary; you, as the physician of Mrs. Wayne, would know more of her habits and can judge better than I possibly could just what relation of intimacy young Peyton held in that house. In plain words, was he a lover of Mrs. Wayne? Or was she merely one of the foolish old women who love to flaunt about with young escorts? I have heard the gossip, but I know that many times an appearance of evil is but a sign of silly vanity."

"Strange as it may seem, I have never been able to make up my mind on that score; Mrs. Wayne idolized the fellow and has given him large sums of money to my certain knowledge; Lol Wayne hates the sight of him, and he and his mother have had many quarrels about Peyton, and yet I cannot say but that the affection between them was on the square."

"I have let both Miss Hart and Peyton go to their homes or rooms, but under strict surveillance, of course. If either of them had anything to do with the crime, possibly as accomplices, they will be more likely to give some clue by thinking they are at liberty."

"Quite right," the doctor replied. "And the finger-print—you have not found it registered at headquarters, I suppose?"

"No, I repeat this is not a professional job, and all the more interesting on that account. I have searched all available records, and no whorl crossed by a '7' has been found. But I hope to locate the man who made it somehow."

"You sent a wireless to Wayne, I suppose?"

"Yes, but a guarded one; the position is peculiar; you know at the beginning of the war he resigned his job, or whatever you want to call it, with the political organization he belonged to; he is an example of the kid-glove politician, and is much disliked by the police force. I felt that my own efforts would be less hampered without instructions from him. I simply wired that his mother is ill and kept the news of the robbery for later divulgence."

"Well, if I know the man, Lol Wayne will be glad he got away before it happened; a queer, cold-blooded sort of fellow. He is not much like the elder Wayne as I remember him; there never was a finer man—a real aristocrat. Young Wayne cares more for the Wall Street ticker than for all the art treasures his father left him."

"Yes, he is a bearish sort of chap in or out of Wall Street. Must you go now? Phone me in the morning how the patient is; if anything new transpires I will call you up."

CHAPTER FOUR

LINDA had climbed the six long flights of stairs that led to old Miss Thorn's tiny rooms on the top floor of the model tenement in

West 69th street. She could not keep quiet in the loneliness of her lodging-house room, and felt that she must talk over the Wayne case with some one who knew them.

It was after ten, and she had not intended to go out again that night, but something impelled her. She really thought she had heard voices from Miss Thorn's rooms as she stood catching her breath on the last landing, but no response came to her repeated knocks, and wearily she started down the long stairs again, wondering idly what could have taken Miss Thorn out again that time of night.

She stood on West End avenue, thinking of the sharp contrast of the streets here to the North and South. Toward the uptown section the broad stretch of Riverside Drive rolled in all its natural beauty and in the splendor of its palatial homes. But in the other direction huddled the most conglomerate mass of mixed dwelling places to be found in the city.

Tempted by the beauty of the night, she wandered in the direction of the river, watching the myriad twinkling lights on the shipping and on the farther Jersey shore.

To the young and beautiful romance always seems near where the rivers and oceans flow, and small wonder if the bewildered but charming girl almost forgot for the nonce the grim tragedy that held her in its clutches. Only Gordon Lake's silver head and fiery eyes came to her mind, and the inexplicable feeling of security that she had felt in his presence, even while all the circumstances threatened her.

Suddenly she was seized from behind and thrust into one of the automobiles that had been her envy but a moment before.

A sense of infinite peril, a second's involuntary cry to Gordon Lake, whose face now seemed receding into vast distances, as some sickish odor overpowered her, and all was a blank for a time.

When she opened her eyes once more it was in the dim blackness of a dirty, sordid room, lit only by a faint flicker from a street light.

She was lying on a hard floor, and the horrible sense came to her that several other huddled forms were also lying on that floor in nondescript promiscuity.

She lay quiet for a time, hardly daring to breathe when a dark-coated arm sought to enfold her.

With a scream she scrambled dizzily to her feet. Dull pains in her head, and the feeling that hours had elapsed since she so peacefully had looked down at the sleeping river and dreamed her little dream made her more terrified than words can express.

What might not have happened in the meantime?

A small flickering gas-jet was hurriedly lit by some one, and the scene that met her bewildered eyes was one to appall her. About fifteen dark-skinned creatures, most of them in shameless stages of undress, lay about the room, and Linda the only woman among them.

"What the hell is the row? Is the girl awake?" came in guttural tones. "Oh, here, you Lopez, let her alone; she belongs to the boss. Take it easy, miss; we won't do nothin' to you; our orders is to just lay low till the mornin'."

But the oily words did not reassure the sickened girl, for the look on the faces of those evil-looking men was beyond words.

She leaped over the nearest forms and made for where a door was outlined, but only to be pinioned by the strong and sinewy arms of the man who seemed to be their leader.

She fought madly and was completely overpowered, but not until her clothes had been torn to ribbons. Bruised and shaking from terror and faintness, she dropped at last at the feet of her captor.

Another interval of unconsciousness followed, but this time, as her drugged senses slowly asserted themselves, she kept as quiet as a mouse, for she realized that only by cunning could she hope for escape.

From the freshness of the wind that blew in through the half-open window she felt that it must be nearly morning, and from the salty tang of the air, that she had not been brought far from the river. She cautiously peered through her half-opened lids.

The extreme swarthiness of the faces about her betokened some south of Europe race, or half-breeds of the mongrel nations, just what she could not judge in her ignorance of such things, but wholly alien was the look of all.

At the sound of a low voice she relaxed herself as if in deep sleep, and listened with all her might.

"Say, Cap, she seems a pesky sort of skirt. Gonna give her some dope to get her on board?"

"Bah! A li'l thing like her? A clip over the head's her size; rotten idea of the boss takin' all this mess and trouble for her. For me, I gotta have 'em big and plump, but the price goes, so what the hell?"

"Do all of us go on board in the morning?"

"That's just as the orders come. This place is too damn cold for us. Mexico is calling us, son."

The speaker seemed a trifle better educated than the others, judging from his speech, and Linda wondered even in her terror who could have any reason for sending her out of the country.

She felt a faint ray of hope as she saw that several of the men were stirring, and one by one they sneaked out by the door which apparently had been unlocked. They evidently belonged to some early gang, for the rest remained settled in the deep sleep of the morning hours.

Ten of them were still there, and the one they called "Cap" had again locked the door, pocketing the key.

Bewildered thoughts followed each other in Linda's mind. What had happened to her that

she should be the center of all these strange events? What possible motive could any one have for getting her out of the way?

That it had something to do with the Wayne trouble she instinctively felt, yet how and why? What could she do?

A thought came to her of some booklets she had read concerning the power called "telepathy," the new and faintly understood power of one mind communicating with another if attuned.

Making one mighty effort to concentrate her whole heart and soul in that inarticulate cry, she poured out a thought current to Gordon Lake to come to her.

CHAPTER FIVE

AFTER Dr. Smiley left Lake in his rooms, the detective smoked in silence for a long time, ruminating over the puzzle that confronted him. In all this vast city, where could he find the clue, or rather the answer to the clue already in his possession. That peculiar figure "7" was the cicatrix of some earlier crime probably. And yet something seemed to tell him that the perpetrator of that deed was not among the criminals of the underworld. There was something more in the case than burglary, he felt sure—some subtle sense or some emanation from the scene had made him feel that terrible passions had been spent there. The greed of gold is the most powerful factor in crime, but it is a hard force, so to speak, more cold-blooded and usually premeditated; but in all the crimes of love, and hate, and jealousy there is something more fluid in their workings, acts done on the spur of the moment, never to be forgotten.

A long time he sat and pondered, and then as suddenly and swiftly seized his hat, coat, and heavy stick, and went out.

He gave a signal ring at the door of a little flat not far from where he lived, and was at once admitted.

A gaudily furnished front and back parlor of a flat of the railroad type was brightly lighted, and a large, flabby-looking female was seated in a still larger rocker.

Heavy features of Teutonic cast, frowsy gray hair, and large, unusually white hands were the salient points of the sole occupant of the room. Heavy black curtains hung in straight folds in the inner room forming what to the initiated was a spirit cabinet. Undoubtedly a fortune-teller, and one of the ignorant kind who are patronized by poor people. Those who conduct their business on a more pretentious plane call themselves "palmists," "astrologers," etc.

Some force of genuineness, however, must have been in this crude creature, or the great Gordon Lake would not have wasted his valuable time in such a call. The fact was the detective was intensely superstitious.

Not neglecting the proper deposit of a bill in the palm of the flabby lady—as much a necessary ceremony as if she were a gypsy—Gordon seated himself and inquired quietly: "Molly, do you think you could get any telegrams for me to-night? I have a case on, and I must confess it is as black as night, so far."

"I don't know, Mr. Lake; I am feeling poorly to-night, but I will see; let me have your own pencil; it'll have some of your own magnetism in it, and that will help."

Spreading her bulk still more comfortably in the big chair, the woman he called Molly seemed to sleep a moment, carelessly holding the pencil; no ouija-board stunt was this, but another class of phenomena that Lake had discovered by accident some time before.

She twirled the pencil about several times, then allowed it to rest on the arm of the rocker.

Total silence prevailed for a space, then faintly came a tapping, tapping; it gradually took a character that could not be accidental, for it spelled in dot and dash the Morse code of telegraphy, a thing of which the woman Molly was totally ignorant Lake felt assured by numerous tests he had made from time to time. She herself did not comprehend its import, but was always ready and willing to humor the odd gentleman who treated her with so much courtesy and paid her so generously.

When that weird tapping, tapping, tapping first came, he always thought of Poe's "Raven," and wondered if Poe did not indeed hear strange messages from the world on the other side of the wall which we call death, but which is only transition.

With notebook in hand, he waited patiently. He was an expert telegrapher, as he was expert in many side lines valuable in his profession.

Molly squirmed and fidgeted in her chair, but the dots and dashes kept on; when she drew a long breath and paused, he read the first message; it ran: "I do not like your necktie, its color is too cold for a winter night."

Lake smiled, for he was quite used to the trivial words that usually came before any message of importance arrived, then took up the notebook once more. The tapping resumed, this time more slowly, but very distinctly, and when it, too, was transcribed, he read: "Why the devil don't you pay your phone bill? Do you want it cut off?"

That, too, was received with a shrug, for well he knew he had forgotten this duty. Another pause, longer this time, a meaningless tattoo for a moment, then once more it took the usual form: "You should have your mother's piano tuned soon, the blind tuner needs his rent."

Making a mental note of that, too, he waited. It was a trial to his nerves; it always was, for why all this trivial stuff must come he never could comprehend, interesting as it was, for each item was true as far as it went.

Perfect silence for a few minutes, and his courage sank. Was this all he was going to get? But soon the pencil began jiggling again.

"Say, can't you give Molly a drink? It will warm her up; she needs it." This, too, had been a part of the ritual more than once, and Lake's pocket flask came into requisition.

Molly swallowed a generous portion, then settled into her chair with a deep sigh.

Suddenly the pencil danced wildly, and it was all Lake could do to keep up with its rapid vibrations.

Several sentences followed; Lake sat on the very edge of his chair with the suspense, then Molly started up with a scream that rang horribly on the night, gasped once or twice, and the seance was over.

Lake was as shaken as the woman herself when he read the last words that he had taken; it was invariably so; first a lot of nonsense, then some truth that appalled one by its pertinence and knowledge of what seemed impossible to know. Then something vital came: "Edmund Peyton holds the life secret of Gertrude Wayne."

Grasping his hat and coat, he hurriedly left the place and hailed a taxi at the corner.

For hours he went from place to place: the Midnight Frolics, the hotels where they danced and dined and drank, the private gambling clubs were all visited in turn or as many as seemed likely to be the haunts of the party that Edmund Peyton was escorting that night on a round of the bubble called pleasure; the social jungles known only to the initiated, where women bloomed like strange orchids, where satin flesh and gleaming jewels were the high signs of the revelers.

Here and there he found where the party had just left, so relentlessly he followed.

Toward morning he arrived at one of the little clubs that have arisen since the Eighteenth Amendment has been in action, the reason being apparent to all and sundry, and he hurried up the steps, hoping his long search would at last be over.

As he was admitted he could hear the sound of a light tenor voice singing a gay song, well known to those who keep in touch with the latest novelty, but now being sung to words probably that would not bear the public's hearing, for such he had heard was the specialty of this particular club. A gay and rollicking laugh greeted the singer's climax, applause, apparently the demand for an encore, the music preluded, and the voice took up the refrain again, but was suddenly cut short by a scream; the voice stopped on a half-uttered syllable and confusion reigned.

Only for a moment, however, for the well-trained attendants knew just what to do, and on entering the room Lake saw that the excitement had been caused by the upsetting of a lighted candle which had caught in the laces of one of the guests. Peyton himself had torn the filmy stuff from the bare shoulder of one of the beauties, and was smothering it out with a heavy curtain he had caught up in the very nick of time. The waiters were bringing fresh bottles and reassuring every one that nothing serious happened.

Lake hurried to Peyton's side, where the flushed young man was ruefully gazing at his scorched and grimy hand.

The detective, too, looked ruefully on as first aid was administered. Selfishly enough, he could not help thinking, would this inopportune burn obliterate the strangely marked whorl he was looking for, or had he misunderstood Molly's last message? Could this almost delicate-looking chap be the brutal visitor of last night in the Wayne mansion?

"Peyton, you've had enough of this, haven't you? Come on out of here; I want to talk to you," he said quietly.

"Enough and more, old man; a burned hand is no joke to me, I can tell you, for of all my little tricks the piano is my best, but we never know, do we?"

When they got outside Lake dismissed his taxi and suggested that they might walk a little, as the early morning air would be refreshing to both of them.

Peyton consented readily, and seemed wholly at his ease, so much so that the thought crossed Lake's mind that if he were the criminal he was a more hardened specimen than he had supposed. A few blocks were traversed in silence, then the officer spoke quite in his usual urbane manner:

"I scarcely expected to find you among the gay crowd to-night; don't think I am taking a liberty in so saying, but when your friend and benefactress is lying so ill I should have thought you would have had little stomach for such a place."

"Right you are, but you see it is business with me; you will find, odd as it may seem to you, that the necessity of business will not wait on one's feelings, if that business happens to take one to such hang-outs at this hour, any more than the demand of the ordinary man's desk can be neglected."

"The business must have been very important." A slight tone of sarcasm was in Lake's voice. He did not take pains to conceal it, but smiled grimly.

Nothing daunted, Peyton swung along at his side as he answered:

"Perhaps it would surprise you if I told you that Lol Wayne is in that building we have just quit."

"What?" Lake was surprised, and for once did not hesitate to show it.

"Yes, Lol Wayne is in there, and it was a dummy who went on board the steamer bound for Europe. Wayne has quite other plans, I have been led to understand. By the way, do you know that old Miss Thorn who goes to the Waynes a lot?"

"No, I have never seen her; but why?"

"She lives somewhere near here, I believe," Peyton answered enigmatically.

What was the fellow getting at? Equivocal in every way, was he trying to sow the seeds of sus-

picion in the mind of Lake in such a thoroughly childish manner?

"Miss Thorn," Peyton continued, "was run down by an automobile yesterday, and is in Roosevelt Hospital; she sent for me, and has given me the keys of her flat in case she finds her injuries serious, as they are apt to be at her age."

Again the note of sarcasm crept into Lake's level tones.

"People seem to be unusually inclined to give you keys, it seems."

They had been walking downtown from the house in the seventies where the club was situated and had now come to that sudden change in the character of the neighborhood which had so struck Linda but a few hours before.

As they were passing a dingy tenement, no different in its looks from a hundred others, some influence seemed to stop Gordon Lake in his tracks.

"What is the matter?" Peyton inquired.

A lifted hand commanded silence; a moment's tense wait, then a woman's voice came faintly calling:

"Help."

Peyton shrugged and said:

"Some laborer giving his better half a few love taps probably. A beast of a place about here the minute you get below 70th street. Let's get back to civilization; your class of work does not lie there." This time the sarcasm was plainly returned in Peyton's remark.

"Wait," Lake answered, "I know that voice"; and know it he did, although he had never heard it until that very morning, but Romance had done quick work in the hitherto untroubled heart of the detective.

For Linda Hart's voice it was, sending out her last cry of despair.

Bounding up the dirty stairs, Lake broke in the old door with only one shove of his powerful shoulders. He instantly took in the scene, the girl's peril and the number of the men still sprawling on the floor. The one she had heard called Lopez was not among the sleepers. He had the girl in his embrace. She was struggling with all her feeble strength, but her weakened body could not bear much more.

The detective rushed in like a fury and attacked the man. To his surprise Peyton aided him. There followed a terrific fight, for the other ruffians, when aroused, used fists and knives without much knowledge of whether it was friend or foe who was struck in the darkness.

CHAPTER SIX

PEYTON, for all his delicate build and burned hand, had given the detective such signal aid in the fight that the thought kept pounding away in Lake's mind that the young man was a much stronger character than he had considered him. His unusual familiarity in the Wayne household had given him so much advantage, his comparative poverty, his connection with the gayer side of the underworld, and many other things all seemed to point to him as the owner of the strangely marked whorl. And yet some baseless doubt still held Lake from taking any steps to verify his suspicion.

Linda he had taken to his home that night, or rather that morning. She had been carefully cared for by his mother, but had insisted on leaving on the second day.

He had visited Miss Thorn in the hospital, but she was very low, and the nurses in charge would not allow much conversation. The only fact he succeeded in eliciting there being that she was a distant connection of Linda Hart on the side of her Canadian grandparents, and that she had scribbled a few words, leaving her few possessions in the model tenement where she had lived for many years to the girl, in return for Linda's having kept up the payments on a small insurance policy, just sufficient to bury her in decent style—that pathetic arrangement often made by the genteel poor.

He had even gone again to see Molly, and had not been niggardly with the precious contents of his flask, but the only result had been more nonsense, and the reitered words "Look nearer; when blood is curdled, it is more poisonous than sour milk." If this meant anything, it still eluded his comprehension.

Nearly a week passed; then one day Linda sent him word that Miss Thorn had died two days before, and had been duly buried—for there is small waiting in the case of such as this poor old friendless woman.

This was a short note sent by a messenger, and evidently written in some agitation, for it begged Gordon Lake to come at once to the former lodging of the dead woman, and said she, Linda, had found something in the woman's trunk that she felt he ought to know about.

As quickly as a motor could take him the detective was on the scene, and climbed the long stairs with a feeling that some real clue was at last within his grasp.

Linda opened the door, and a crimson flush flooded her cheeks and neck to the line of her blouse, to recede as quickly, leaving her so wan and haggard that it was all Lake could do not to take her in his arms, then and there, to comfort her and hold her for life.

"I sent for you, Mr. Lake"—she trembled—"for I have found a packet of letters that I think you ought to see."

And she nervously thrust a bundle in his hands.

A hasty glance showed him that they were love letters of several years ago, as they were dim and faded, but fairly legible. Most of them were addressed to Mrs. Lorillard Wayne, and began "My darling Gertrude——," but the signatures had been cut off in nearly every case. Only one had been overlooked, but one was enough.

Instantly Molly's cryptic message came to Lake's mind.

Taking his notebook from his pocket, he scanned again the weird telegram he had received from the Unknown.

"Edmund Peyton holds the life secret of Gertrude Wayne."

It had seemed clear enough, but now he read a different meaning into it from the contents of these long buried love-letters.

So intent had he been on these that he scarcely noticed what Linda was saying until she held out a package done up in a plain candy box.

"Mr. Lake, what do you suppose these are? They are all rough in shape, or I would have thought they were beads, but they are such a wonderful color."

And there in a room in a tenement, surrounded by every evidence of poverty, she held out to him the box worth a king's ransom.

Innocently she passed it over as if it were just some odd or end, and as carelessly he took it, thinking rapidly as he was of his next move, which must be no mistake now.

One glance, and he hurried to the light.

"Good heavens! They are uncut rubies that are more priceless than a quart of diamonds. How came they here?"

"Uncut rubies!" Linda said gaspingly.

Lake thought quickly. The most unlikely place is almost the safest place, and who would think of the poor old woman being the custodian of this splendor, for that she was the thief did not occupy him for a moment. Death had merely played a hand in the game to bring to light the culprit.

"No telephone, of course, but I must seal up this room at once, and put the affair in the hands of the proper authorities. This is no trifling matter. Come, Linda, you must not stay here; neither must you go to your own room just yet; please go to my mother, and stay until I come."

Neither noticed that he had used her christian name, so wholly natural it seemed for him to be caring for her.

Gordon Lake in action was another man from the meditative student. But even then he found time for a long and thrilling hand clasp before he ushered the girl from the door, making her promise to take the first taxi she could find.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AN hour later the detective was shown into the office of Simeon Flood, a legal and medical expert in criminology.

A high light in this line himself, Lake still went now and then to Flood when he felt that the latter's wisdom and experience might help him.

Waiving ceremony, he began at once:

"Doctor Flood, I know you have had a fad for a long time of collecting the fingerprints of notables, just as I have those of the lower strata of society."

"Yes," was the reply, "that is true, and they are not so very different, either, are they?"

But Lake was in no mood for discussion. Pulling the copy from his notebook of the singular-marked whorl, he asked:

"Have you the mate of this?"

"Yes, I have; there is no mistaking it, for I have never seen another so marked." A tense moment and he produced its counterpart.

"And it is that of?"

"Lorillard Wayne, 2d."

"Enough! I thought so, but could hinge nothing real on my conjecture. A sad business; thank you, doctor."

Lake could now picture the whole scene. He had known for a long time that Wayne's excesses had swallowed most of the Wayne fortune, and that frequent quarrels had been the case between him and his mother on account of his constant demands, as Wayne the elder had left the bulk of his money to her, knowing all about the idle and extravagant life of his son.

The bundle of love letters in his pocket, like a voice from the grave, told him, also, that Edmund Peyton was her own son, the illicit result of a love affair that she had succeeded in keeping secret; but her intense love for this second son had always been a menace to her. Her interest and many gifts to him were a constant cause of Wayne's jealous rage.

In the dead of night he had robbed his own mother and nearly killed her, as the fright had caused the deadly stroke. What mingled emotions had throbbed in that awful scene.

As Lake was nearing his home, for he felt that he could no longer wait to see Linda and explain to her all that he had unearthed, he heard an "extra" being called.

Buying one, he was startled to read of the suicide of young Wayne in the little Club, where he had apparently been hiding for several days.

An interview with Peyton served to fit in the various missing links. Wayne had tried to make love to Linda from the day she entered his mother's door. He had conceived the plan of stealing his mother's jewels, leaving the rubies with the poor old mending woman, knowing she was devoted to the Wayne family, and would be utterly unsuspicious if he left the package with her to be sent for later. Then he made the attempt to abduct Linda, intending to sail for South America.

A lover of Sacred History once waited seven years for the flower of a woman's love. And feeling a certain sense of solemnity when he thought what the full and perfect happiness of one woman's love might mean, Lake pondered deeply on the hidden ways of Fate—the fateful '7' that had revealed the dark shadows in the life of one group of people—but he fervently hoped that it would result in opening vistas of a happy and glorious future in his and Linda's life.

The Taking of Mrs. Triggs

By JOHN GOTTLIEB JACOBS

CHAPTER ONE.

DETECTIVE J. CULLEN DILLINGHAM was not the austere, morose type of man, in spite of the fact that that was exactly the sort his name suggested. He was a tall, youngish fellow, athletically built, with a flash in his pale blue eyes that spoke of profound common reasoning. And there was even more of the mental brilliancy hidden behind that sloping forehead of his than what was apparent to the casual observer. Dillingham was endowed with a certain sixth sense, an inner faculty of perception that all good detectives have. Never reading an event in the papers without afterwards laying it aside and pondering over its causes and the underlying substance of the occurrence, he was certain to develop a fine sense of inductive reasoning. More, Dillingham could read between the lines.

On this occasion, as the door of Dillingham's office closed presumptuously behind the clerk, the detective found himself face to face with a small, rat-faced, almost bald gentleman, who nevertheless was immaculately dressed and whose finger-nails gleamed like the teeth of a wolf. Dillingham took in the newcomer's general appearance and outlook with a glance. The stout gentleman seemed to be in extreme anxiety, for he moved restlessly in the chair, and now and then peered nervously about him.

"You have something of importance to convey?" began Dillingham interrogatively, after he had mentally reached a decision as to the agreeability of the man.

"Yes, Mr. Dillingham," responded the visitor rather hastily, somewhat inspired to confidence by the detective's conciliatory tones. "I am in great trouble, and only such a man as you can help me out."

"I shall be pleased to comply with any reasonable request for my services," remarked Dillingham, smiling vaguely. "If you will co-operate with me by letting me into your entire trust, we shall see what can be done, Mr.—Mr.——"

This was one of Dillingham's many harmless but effective tricks of trade, for he never cared to open verbal correspondence with any visitor without first becoming acquainted with his name.

"Oh, yes!" rejoined the stout man quickly. "How thoughtless of me! He jabbed a thick-fingered hand into the depths of an inner pocket, fumbled for the space of a brief moment, and drew forth a bulging wallet. From this he extracted a tiny, blue-rimmed card, which he handed to the detective.

"Mr. Saxon Withrows," Dillingham noted. "Harriman Hotel, Proprietor."

"That's better," asserted the detective. "Now we are acquainted. I suppose, Mr. Withrows, that your trouble is in some way linked with the hotel?"

"It certainly is," the hotel owner affirmed. "More than indirectly, too. And to think," he added, with a spasm of mild, regretful anger, "to think that those two hair-brained house detectives, whom I feed and clothe without receiving a whit of service in return, refuse to work on the case. They just throw their hands in the air and say that this thing is beyond the pale of their contracts."

"Will you acquaint me with the details?"

"To be sure! But before I begin, I want to inform you that this is not an ordinary case. You may wonder when I have finished why it is that I do not call upon a lawyer, instead of a detective, for this matter may require some knowledge of law. To tell the truth, I have already visited my attorney, Mr. Brockhold, and he has recommended me to you."

"I'm obliged to Mr. Brockhold," Dillingham nodded.

"Two months ago," Mr. Withrows began, in a tensely earnest voice, "a woman calling herself Mrs. Philips Henry Triggs registered at the Harriman and engaged the most expensive suite in the hotel. Of course we knew nothing of her, except that she was from San Francisco, and that she was accompanied by two maids. There was rumor concerning her, as there always is in a hotel when the subject is a distinguished guest, which had it that Mrs. Triggs was the wife of a Western oil king, a multi-millionaire; that she had quarreled with him and left him. How true this is I am not at all certain, as the question is gravely open to doubt, but I will say that if appearance counts for anything, Mrs. Triggs is more than what is rumored about her. She has beautiful clothes, fit for the wife of a king; makes a most exalted appearance, is dignified but respectful, and seems to be liked wherever she goes. In truth, she had no trouble getting into New York society, in spite of her apparent strangeness to the city.

"Last Monday Mrs. Triggs called for me personally, and handed me a tiny bronze casket which she asked me to have placed in the vault for safety's sake. I remember specifically hearing her say this as I was going out, 'Be very careful, Mr. Withrows, as that jewel-box contains a gift of my husband's, something that is invaluable to me.'

"Well, Mr. Dillingham, curiosity prompted me to glance into the casket on my way to the vault. And such a dazzling array of gems grouped together on a single diadem—I have yet to witness their equal! They were wonderful; no, wonder-

ful is no name for them. They were splendid, brilliant, more than magnificent! I confess I stopped and stood spellbound in my tracks as I gazed at them. They thrilled me; I felt myself trembling at mere sight of them.

"However, that has nothing to do with the story, except to convey the idea that the gems were positively genuine, and that, in a rough estimation, they were worth at least $50,000. I am myself somewhat of an expert in jewelry, and I know that what I say is true.

"The day following Mrs. Triggs again called for me, and asked me to get the casket and its contents from the vault, as she had an unexpected evening reception to attend. I complied with her request, and forgot all about the matter until that same evening, at the Travelers' Club, when I received a hasty message from the night clerk. Imagine my surprise and consternation when he somewhat breathlessly informed me that Mrs. Triggs' jeweled diadem was missing, and that Mrs. Triggs was nearly beside herself with grief!

"It did not take me long to learn the details, once I had speedily returned to the hotel. Mrs. Triggs, as soon as I had handed her the casket, had placed them on the mirror piece in the room, and had gone into the next chamber to dress. Both the maids were helping her with her dressing, eliminating the possibility of their having taken it. Also Mrs. Triggs asserts that they are to be trusted explicitly, vigorously denouncing any suggestion that there may have been confederates. Mrs. Triggs, upon being questioned, says that she thought she had heard a rustling in the next room, but concluded at the time that she was mistaken. This latter statement, I think, is rather suggestive."

"Rather careless of this Western empress in leaving such an expensive ornament lying about, I should think," commented Dillingham, breaking in. "I have read all about the mishap several days ago, Mr. Withrows, and am already aware of most of the details. May I put a few questions?"

The proprietor of the Harriman nodded an affirmation.

"To begin with," said the detective, tapping the glistening surface of the desk reflectively, "you knew absolutely nothing of this woman before she registered?"

"Nothing whatsoever."

"She is holding the management responsible for the loss of the gems?"

"Yes, Mr. Dillingham. At first it was my contention that she would consider it her loss, because of the fact that it was her own carelessness that lost it. But only yesterday I received a note from her lawyer which hinted at legal proceedings if I did not settle immediately in an amiable way. You must know that we run the hotel on a strictly liable basis, assuming responsibilities even when we should not do so. Our advertisements convey this intelligence, and it is undoubtedly because of this that the Harriman is so popular."

"Did her lawyer ask for any definite sum?"

"Fifty-five thousand dollars. If this is not paid within a month, he states, I shall be sued for $76,000, the sum that Mrs. Triggs prices the gems, plus $10,000 for her trouble, expense, and waste of time."

The detective said nothing, but looked thoughtfully into the beseeching eyes of the other.

"And the worst of it all is," continued Mr. Withrows, "I cannot possibly pay that large sum at the present time. Although I am not a poor man, still this is the time of the year when there are notes for huge sums falling due, and I must meet them. And I cannot borrow, nor am I willing to part with an interest in the hotel. I cannot possibly raise the sum in any manner that will suit me. On the other hand, if this matter is dragged into court it will be sure to mar the reputation of the hotel, and I value that not at thousands, but at millions."

"Are you certain that the diadem is not still in the hotel—that it may have been mysteriously lost in some odd nook or recess?"

"Absolutely certain. We have searched the premises from top to bottom, as thoroughly as possible, and have employed experts to do the same. Even the garden below Mrs. Triggs' window was dug up. And there are no secret panels or niches in the building. It was built with complete ingenuousness."

"Has any advertising been done to recover the gems?"

For answer, Mr. Withrows again drew forth his voluminous wallet, and dug out a newspaper clipping from among its contents, which he handed to Dillingham.

"This," he said, "is but a sample of the extensive advertising we have done to recover the diadem. We have inserted ads in almost every publication in the city."

Dillingham read the advertisement, which ran thus:

"LOST OR STOLEN—Jeweled diadem enclosed in a small bronze casket. Owner, Mrs. P. H. Triggs, Harriman Hotel, New York City. Liberal reward—$3,000 and no questions asked. Communicate with Mr. Withrows."

The detective handed the clipping back to the hotel owner, rose, and paced the floor. The eyes of Mr. Withrows followed him imploringly.

"This is rather a unique case," Dillingham remarked at length. "However, I shall do all in my power to help you out. It will be unnecessary for me to see Mrs. Triggs for the present, but I shall pay her a visit before this affair blows over. There is in reality but one issue to determine whether or not you are the victim of a plot. If the negative, it will be necessary to repay your lawyer a visit."

"Thank you, Mr. Dillingham," said Mr. With-

rows, rising. "Therefore, I shall expect your aid in the case?"

"Yes. I shall begin work immediately."

"Very well. Good-day, Mr. Dillingham. By the way, have you arrived at any estimation as to how this thing may turn out?"

"Yes, but it is only a foregone conclusion, and usually doesn't amount to much. It is this: I have a hunch that Mrs. Triggs knows more than she has revealed!"

CHAPTER TWO

BEFORE J. Cullen Dillingham went to bed that night, he had arrived at a course of action which to pursue on the Triggs case. The first thing he did upon rising the next morning was to obtain a morning newspaper to read anything therein that might concern the case. There was nothing of importance, however, except the large advertisement and a notice of no new developments concerning the theft.

Hastening to a telegraph station, he despatched a telegram to a co-worker of his in San Francisco, asking for information concerning Mrs. Triggs. Five hours later he was reading this reply:

"MR. DILLINGHAM: Mrs. Triggs, wife of Phillip H. Triggs, petroleum and oil king. Her extravagance cause of quarrel three months ago. Left for New York after being refused more money, and is staying at Harriman Hotel. Was formerly an actress. Is this sufficient information? If not, will send more details.

(Signed) "JAMES P. THOMPSON."

There was a grim smile of satisfaction on Dillingram's visage as he hurried from the station to the office. This was exactly the information he had hankered for. If Mrs. Triggs was extravagant, if she had no money to satisfy that extravagance, what might she not do?

Detective Dillingham, however, did not allow his imagination to run wild. He was too much of a detective for that.

By now the noon issues of the evening papers were on sale, their contents shrieked forth unintelligently by hustling newsboys. Dillingham eagerly purchased a paper, and glanced hastily over the columns of the front page. He was disappointed, however, to find that nothing of importance concerning the theft of the diadem had as yet been disclosed. Once in the street car, he turned to the Lost and Found columns, and discovered Mr. Withrows' large advertisement still heading the list.

Dillingham was about to throw the newspaper on the empty seat beside him when his attention was attracted by a small, unimportant-looking advertisement, headed by the single word, "Notice." But it was not this that had attraced his attention. His roving glance had alighted, where it now stayed, on the word uppermost in his mind—gem.

Dillingham read the apprisement with fervent indifference. A turgid-looking cartoon of an enormous-headed jeweler hard at work on the gems that fairly swam about him adorned the side of the advertisement. The words were small, printed as though written, and gave its intelligence in this wise:

NOTICE—Dorylaeum Art Paint for sale. Absolutely guaranteed to deceive the greatest experts. Will make the dullest glass like the most brilliant gem. All colors and shades. Apply a little of this paint to the commonest stone, and you will have a clinging lustre."

Again and again Dillingham read it, each time with increasing interest. There was some vague, all-too-flimsy connecting link, he knew, between this new discovery and the theft of Mrs. Triggs' jeweled diadem. He vividly recalled to mind Mr. Withrows having told him of the material brilliance of the lost gems; of the fact that their very burnishing splendor held him spellbound. And then a horrible suspicion came into the detective's mind. What if the contents of Mrs. Triggs' diadem were covered with a coating of this Dorylaeum Art Paint? What if the lost or stolen gems were worthless—"fake," to use a trite expression.

This, however, was only a theory. He must not take everything for granted. But an inner sense of spiritual knowledge told him that he was right—that the lost gems really were worthless and made to appear otherwise by the coating of this paint. He must proceed slowly, however, he told himself, and be sure of himself before he made any definite move. A false turn and failure would stare him in the face.

The next morning found him up early, with a newspaper before him for companion. The Lost or Stolen advertisement of Mrs. Triggs' was in its usual position, as was the proclamation of the selling of the "brilliant art paint." Again Dillingham went over the latter slowly. Then he turned to the other, which was the first of a number of the same sort, and scanned the list intently. His gaze stopped at the last advertisement, and as he read his interest grew by leaps and bounds.

"Lost," it ran, "a number of worthless gems, enclosed in a small jewel casket, on July 12, between Harriman Hotel and Stilton Place, in a direct line. Liberal reward to finder. Communicate with Karl Bogia, 1012 Stilton Place."

A wide yet non-committal grin spread on Dillingham's features as he read the advertisement a second and still a third time. Vague realization was beginning to dawn upon him. The mystery, which had up to the present appeared all too formidable, was beginning to unravel itself of its own accord.

Snatching up his hat, and throwing a hasty word to the manservant who came pattering into the hall at sound of his master's haste, he quickly descended the steps and boarded a street car. Fifteen minutes' ride found him entering the lobby of the Harriman Hotel.

He greeted a clerk, and inquired where he might find Mr. Withrows. The employee, a shrinking, impetuous fellow, scarcely more than a boy, informed him that the hotel owner had been called out of town, and would not be back until the following day. Disappointed, Dillingham was about to retrace his steps, when the clerk called him back.

"You are Mr. Dillingham?" asked the fellow anxiously.

"I am," replied the detective.

"There is something that I've been holding back for the past week," began the clerk with lingering seriousness, "something that I should have immediately revealed at the time of the robbery of Mrs. Triggs' jewels, but fear held me back. However, my conscience has not allowed me a moment of rest since that time, and I am going to make a clean breast of it."

"Well?" asked Dillingham interrogatively, elevating his brows.

"It is this. On the evening of the theft, a man entered the hotel, acting as if he were the worst kind of criminal, and asked me whether it were possible to see Mrs. Triggs personally. I replied that as far as I was concerned it was, and I would send up a boy to see whether she would allow such a meeting. This I did, sending the name up with the boy, and the reply was to show him up to her apartments immediately.

"Ten minutes later, after the man had hurried up the steps, Mrs. Triggs telephoned down to me that if there was some one to see her, he had better do so directly, as she had a reception to attend. I was a great deal surprised at this, and informed her that the man had already gone up to her suite. It was her turn to be amazed, then she laughed and remarked about it undoubtedly being some idiot trying to play a joke."

"Are you certain it was Mrs. Triggs at the other end of the wire?"

"Absolutely. I am very well acquainted with her voice."

"Go on," said the detective.

"She had scarcely hung up when the subject of the affair came down the stairs with unnatural quickness, and without glancing in either direction, nor so much as noticing me, vanished into the crowd outside. And a short while after that Mrs. Triggs, agitated beyond expression, flurried up to the desk and reported her gems missing."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" said Dillingham stoically, though jubilation rang in his heart.

"I was afraid that perhaps it had nothing to do with the robbery, and feared to be dragged into court as a witness."

"Can you imagine why Mrs. Triggs reported this information to the police?"

"I don't know, sir."

"You said the man told you his name. If he is the thief, undoubtedly it is an alias, but still it may help in the uncovering of this mystery. What was it?"

The reply was unexpected:

"Karl Bogia."

"Would you recognize him if you saw him again?"

"I am certain I would."

"Very well, then," said Dillingham coolly, leveling a significant finger, "I am going to give you a chance to atone for the trouble you have caused by your silence. By the way, what is your name?"

"Thomas McGregory."

"Very well, McGregory. First of all, here is a newspaper clipping that I want you to read." Dillingham extracted a clipping from an inner pocket and handed it to the clerk. "Now, tell me what you think of it."

McGregory took the notification of the loss of the "worthless gems," and was silent while his eyes ran over the words. Perplexed unenlightenment was for the moment written on his features; then, as he noticed the name Karl Bogia, a look of amazement came into his eyes.

"I see it all now," he cried, with some heat. "This man is the thief! He stole the gems, lost them as he hurried homeward, and now advertises for them, stating that they are worthless, because he is both afraid that, if he told the truth as to the value of the jewels, they would never be returned or perhaps he may be linked with the theft."

"Apparently," Dillingham conceded, "but I am afraid that there is a greater plot to it than that. Now what I want you to do is to pay this Bogia a visit, tell him you have found the gems, and offer them for sale. I want to make certain that this man is precisely the same individual as the one who was here on the night of the robbery. Of course he will immediately offer a price, but you can do nothing but reject his offers. As soon as you are out of the house send by messenger either one of these two words, yes or no; yes meaning that he is the same man, and no for the negative. Will you do this for me instantly?"

McGregory nodded eagerly.

That evening, at precisely five minutes before six, a white sheet of paper was brought to Dillingham by a red-faced, perspiring youth, who looked at the paper curiously before handing it to the detective. It was devoid of any writing, save for the single word, "Yes."

Hastily dismissing the lad with several coins, Dillingham donned his hat and walked out in the street, from where he was hurried to his destination by a trolley. As he entered the lobby of the hotel, his gaze fell upon Mr. Withrows, who noticed him at exactly the same moment.

The two men shook hands mechanically. The look of worry and partly rabid fear had not yet left the troubled eyes of the hotel proprietor.

"Have you made any revelations as yet," he asked, his hand quivering in Dillingham's palm.

"A great deal," asserted the detective quietly, coolly. "In fact, I believe that we shall arrive at the bottom of the mystery to-night, if it is at all possible. I would like to interview Mrs. Triggs, Mr. Withrows. Is she in at present?"

Mr. Withrows nodded, walked over to the desk, and gave the operator a number. When he returned to Dillingham he said, "Mrs. Triggs says she'll see you."

Accompanied by the hotel owner, Dillingham entered Mrs. Triggs' apartment. The first thing he noticed upon entering was the exquisite and more than luxurious way which the room had been furnished. His feet fairly sank into the dark, velvet-like rugs; a faint, pleasing odor pervaded the atmosphere.

Mrs. Triggs was already in the room to greet them. She was a woman of aggrandizement, graciously haughty, and there was an air about her that was pleasing. She nodded somewhat coldly to Mr. Withrows, but smiled politely at the detective.

"Is there anything I can do that will help you in any way?" she inquired piquantly, after having invited them to the luxury of the sofa.

"There is," said Dillingham briefly. "There are some things that I want to acquaint you with, Mrs. Triggs, and that is why I am here. May I first put a few questions?"

"As many as you like," Mrs. Triggs answered.

"You will pardon me if I am a bit personal, for in cases like this everything must be delved into. To begin: Do you know any one named Karl Bogia?"

"I do not," Mrs. Triggs replied frigidly.

"Very good. Now, madam, are you certain that you know nothing whatsoever of the theft other than that which you have already revealed?"

"Nothing whatsoever!" Her tone was distant, and a dull hue tinged her cheeks.

"You are certain?"

"Absolutely!"

"I am truly sorry," remarked the detective soberly, regarding Mrs. Triggs through narrowed, regretful eyes, "I am sorry that I have to contradict your statement, but such is the case. You see, I know otherwise."

Mrs. Triggs arose slowly, drawing herself up with great hauteur. The color of tinseled ice flamed in her cheeks. Her lily-like hands were clenched; her eyes bulged unnaturally. During the racking silence that followed she stared at Dillingham as though he had committed a blunder unpardonable.

"Do you mean," she said evenly, at length, "are you insinuating that I myself have stolen the diadem, and am hiding it to blackmail Mr. Withrows?"

"I insinuate nothing," smiled the detective, "but I repeat, you know more than you have revealed."

Mrs. Triggs was trembling. Impotent anger seemed to possess her. Her almost nude arms quivered visibly.

"That's an insult, you—you liar!" she burst out finally, "an insult! You will detract that statement and apologize, or—or——"

"I shall do nothing of the kind, Mrs. Triggs, for what I say is the truth. And having gotten so far in this very unpleasant affair, I am going to blurt out the whole matter. I accuse you, Mrs. Triggs, of attempting to blackmail Mr. Withrows out of $50,000!"

Mouth wide open, Mr. Withrows half started out of his seat. With a look, Dillingham reassured him.

Incredulous amazement, somewhat mingled with intense fury, featured on the woman's face. "You lie!" she screamed, but her voice was hoarse.

"Let us see whether I do or not," said the detective, leveling his inevitable finger. "To begin with, Mrs. Triggs, I started out to unravel this mystery with a definite idea in mind. I knew, as any sensible person would know, that there was something faulty in your account of the theft. How do you account for the door having been locked from the inside after the occurrence? And also, a woman who owned gems worth a fortune would not be so careless as to leave them where they could be easily stolen.

"I started working on the case with this theory. I discovered that you had once been an actress; that you took part in a play the plot of which is exactly the counterpart of this very sorrowful occurrence. This is how the idea was suggested to you.

"I needed a motive to be sure of myself. People usually don't do things unless they have reasons for doing them. I discovered that you were very extravagant and that you were out of funds. This was a sufficient motive to work from.

"You next got in touch with Karl Bogia, whom I happen to know as some one whom the police are in search of. In fact I've got him locked up now as your accomplice. He noticed the advertisement of the Dorylaeum Art Paint, suggested a plan of getting money under false pretenses, and offered his aid in the matter. The scheme was this: He was to enter your rooms, take the false gems, coated by this paint, from you and disappear from the hotel. You were then to force the management to make immediate settlement with you under liability of court proceedings. It was a glorious plan, I grant you, but it failed dismally when your co-conspirator lost the casket containing the false gems on the way home. Little occurrences such as this will happen, and will——"

Suddenly Mrs. Triggs, who up to the present had been listening to the detective's biting words with stoical contempt, emitted a piercing shriek,

and with the celerity of a cat dashed for the next chamber. She had closed and locked the door before the startled men came after her. As they pounded on the unyielding door, they heard low moans from the other side. At length, after four or five futile attempts, Dillingham managed to burst the door open. The sight they beheld in the next chamber was indeed nerve-racking.

Mrs. Triggs lay on the floor, a tiny black bottle clasped tightly in one outstretched hand, while the other was bent under her and slightly clenched. The absence of the tiny bottle's contents, plus the rigid way in which Mrs. Triggs' jaws were fixed, showed that she had already taken the poison. Her eyes appeared to smile mockingly, her mouth was curled downward, as though frowning acridly at the world she was slowly leaving behind.

A NOVEL MAILBAG.

"HOW many people know that South America can boast of the simplest postoffice in the world? It would take considerable guessing on the part of the reader to locate this postoffice, for he would find it at the very end of the continent. Even then he might not recognize it.

"Opposite Tierra del Fuego is a very high, rocky cliff overhanging the Straight of Magellan, and from one of the rocks is suspended, by a long chain, a barrel which receives mail. To be sure, there is no postmaster, nor is there any regular letter carrier or collector, but every ship that goes through the strait stops and sends a boat to this curious little postoffice, looks over the letters that are in it to see if there are any for the men on board that particular ship, and places therein letters for seamen on board ships that are known to be headed for the Magellan strait. Who the person was that first thought of such a scheme we are not told, but the sailors think a great deal of their unique postoffice, and there has never yet, to anybody's knowledge, been any violation of the confidence reposed in it. When a sailor sends a letter to it addressed to another seaman he is absolutely certain of its delivery. It may be that one of the two seamen is on a vessel which is not expected to pass by this ocean postoffice, but the letter may have on it a request that a vessel going east or west shall pick it up and deliver it to some point where the seaman will be sure to receive it. In this manner letters have been known to make their way to the Arctic Ocean, or even to India."

OLDEST COLLEGE ON CONTINENT.

NOW that normal political and economic conditions are being rapidly restored in this country the famous University of Mexico, which was founded nearly 500 years old, is preparing to widen its scope of education, according to announcement which comes from the City of Mexico, where the institution is situated. An exchange of students with the leading colleges of the United States is proposed.

During the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries the University of Mexico was recognized as the greatest educational institution upon the American continent. It was about the year 1548 that Don Antonio de Mendoza, first Viceroy of Mexico and the founder of the colleges of Tlalteloco for the Indians, saw the necessity of establishing a university and to this effect gave some lands of his own to be a site of the future institution.

A petition was then sent to the King of Spain, asking him to give his consent for the formal opening of the university. The petition was received with great favor by Charles V, and by a decree given at Toro on Sept. 21, 1551, he ordered its foundation, giving for that purpose an annuity of $1,000. By this time, however, Mendoza had left the Government of Mexico to take charge of that of Peru, so that his immediate successor, Luis de Velasco, carried out the orders of the King.

The university did not have anything that might be called a library until 1760. The rector at this time was Manuel Ignacio Beye De Cisneros. The library had over 10,000 volumes, among which were many relating to Mexican history books that were compiled by the efforts of the monks, and which unfortunately perished almost in their entirety during the calamitous years of civil strife that followed the independence. The library of the university was of great advantage not only to its members but also to outsiders, who had ready access to it twice a day.

To gather 10,000 volumes at that early period must have called forth extraordinary energies and love of learning. As the seas were usually overrun with pirates, it was not an easy matter to bring books and other valuables from Europe. Hence it is not too much to say that at least 60 percent of the books were printed in Mexico, particularly so when we are told that among the number there were many relating to Mexican history, a subject about which those living in Mexico were better qualified to write.

Detected By Chance

By A PARISIAN DETECTIVE

IN the Rue de Roque in Paris there once resided a remarkable man. His name was Fargut, and to all his neighbors he was a living mystery. His mode of life was peculiar.

The house occupied by M. Fargut was a small, solid, stone structure, which had been built by M. Fargut's own order, and in accordance with his peculiar directions. It was as impregnable as a prison—and indeed it resembled one more than anything else.

The windows were small and narrow.

The doors were as heavy as those of a bank vault, and yet M. Fargut was a man of small means, and he never kept money or valuables in his prison-like abode.

Indeed his sole income was derived from the rental of a small property in Rouen, the receipts of which barely sufficed to support his establishment.

In his stone house M. Fargut lived with one servant—a stout fellow, who had been a soldier in the great world war.

This man, Baptiste Saycour by name, was known to be devotedly attached to his singular old master, and M. Fargut never, under any circumstance, left his house unless he was closely attended by Baptiste.

The sleeping-room of M. Fargut was constructed as strongly as the money-safe of a miser. The door was plated with iron, and the one window was crossed by heavy iron bars placed about eight inches apart. When M. Fargut retired at night he always double-locked and triple-bolted the door on the inside. Moreover, Baptiste always slept on a couch placed against the door of his master's sleeping-room.

It was, therefore, impossible for any one to enter M. Fargut's sleeping-room, without disturbing Baptiste or awakening his master.

A burglar could not have opened the door without many hours of labor and much noise, and the window could only be entered by removing the heavy iron bars.

The neighbors who became acquainted with the habits of M. Fargut, from the gossip of Baptiste with the other servants, concluded that the singular old gentleman must be a monomaniac on the subject of thieves and burglars.

Upon no other theory could they account for his having taken so many remarkable precautions to prevent the entrance of any person to his sleeping-room.

Further, it would seem that the old man was in constant dread of some danger when out of his house, else why would he never leave it except accompanied by Baptiste, who acted as his bodyguard?

All these particulars came to Boucharde the French detective's knowledge in invstigating the case we are to tell you about.

He had met M. Fargut several times, for he resided in the same street, and had observed that the old man had a peculiarly watchful and apprehensive look in his eyes, like one who is constantly on the alert for and half expects to encounter an unseen danger.

When Boucharde derived these impressions from M. Fargut's face he had not become an object of particular interest, but the detective was of the opinion that there was some peculiar mystery in the old man's life, of which the world at large was ignorant, that exerted a remarkable influence on his present existence.

It had been Boucharde's experience that a man in the possession of reason always has a motive for any peculiar course of life.

One morning M. Fargut failed to open the door of his singular and prison-like sleeping-room at the usual hour. He was always very punctual in the time of his appearance, and at eight o'clock, summer or winter, as sure as the hour came, the door of M. Fargut's apartment would open, and he would come out.

Baptiste was alarmed at his master's non-appearance, for he thought he must be ill, to in this manner break a rule of his life that had become a habit.

The devoted servant proceeded to rap upon the iron-plated door, but there was no answer.

No sound came from within, and yet Baptiste well knew that his master was a light and restless sleeper.

Baptiste became more and more alarmed. In his excitement he rained heavy blows in rapid succession upon the unyielding door, but all in vain. He could not attract the attention of his master.

Filled with terror, he made haste to inform the police, and the commissary of the precinct sent Boucharde with several members of the day patrol to investigate the matter.

They called a couple of blacksmiths, but with all their efforts it was a considerable time before they succeeded in forcing open the door.

When, at last, this was accomplished, a horrible sight presented itself to their eyes.

Upon the floor lay M. Fargut, stone dead.

There was an expression of terror upon his pinched and wrinkled face, and his eyes protruded from their sockets. His mouth, moreover,

was wide open, as though he were gasping for breath. An examination showed that he had been crushed to death.

Several of his ribs were broken, and it seemed as though he had been encircled by bands of steel that had slowly tightened and compressed the unfortunate victim until he was dead.

But no trace of the murderer or of the strange implement by which M. Fargut had met his death could be discovered. The bars on the window were intact and they had not been tampered with.

The room was examined by experts, and it was positively demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that there was no such thing as a secret entrance to the room.

How, then, had the mysterious assassin gained an entrance?

This was what made the crime in the Rue de Roque the most mysterious murder ever committed in Paris. In fact, it at once became a celebrated case.

The detectives regarded the affair as miraculous, and so it seemed. Boucharde was especially detailed by the prefect to ferret out the mystery when all had failed.

When he visited the room of M. Fargut the morning his murder was discovered, he had found upon the window-sill two small substances like the scales of a fish. These could not be regarded as a clue, but it was a strange place to find them, to say the least, and he put them carefully away in his pocketbook. When he undertook the solution of the mystery of the Rue de Roque, the prefect said to him:

"M. Boucharde, if you are successful in this case, your future is assured, and rapid promotion awaits you."

From that moment the detective resolved that he would succeed, and he said to himself:

"I will know no such thing as failure."

Upon reflection, he decided that the motive for the murder could be found, if found at all, in the history of M. Fargut's life before he came to reside in the house in the Rue de Roque.

The officer's starting point in his investigation must go back over all the years of the old man's life, and work up carefully to the day of his death. It seemed like a herculean task to follow up a long life, and acquaint oneself with all its history, but he was not discouraged.

On the contrary, he was all the more determined to surmount every obstacle, and it had been a belief of his that a man will accomplish any purpose if he attempts its accomplishment with all his heart and soul.

Fate meant to deal kindly with him, for his first move was crowned with success. He made an important discovery. It came about in this wise.

Boucharde thought that he would first consult the secret archives of the police, in which are recorded the names of those with whom the department has had to do, and the particulars thereof, and he called upon the prefect of police, who received him in the library of the office.

Boucharde stated his wish.

He touched a bell and a moment later the bald-headed old secretary appeared.

"M. Fiscal, consult the secret archives of the police department of the Seine, and ascertain if the name of Jean Fargut appears in them, and if so make a note of the matter, and submit it to me without delay."

M. Fiscal bowed and withdrew. M. Fargut's given name was Jean.

The prefect offered Boucharde a glass of wine, and then leaned back in his arm-chair with a cigar.

They conversed about the crime in the Rue de Roque. Half an hour elapsed. It was a half hour of anxiety to the detective, for much depended upon M. Fiscal's report. Presently he came in.

"I have found the name of Jean Fargut!" he said, with some excitement, as he reached the table.

Boucharde sprang to his feet.

M. Fiscal read as follows an extract from the archives of the police:

"Jean Fargut, an informer and spy of the police; pardoned for a crime because he denounced and assisted in the capture of Raoul Sapeau, a professional assassin, and the trainer and exhibiter of reptiles."

Boucharde uttered a joyful cry.

"I have found a clue. I'll solve the mystery of M. Fargut's assassination now. I am sure of success. Thanks for your information," he said.

The detective knew an old police officer who had retired, who had been in active service at the date of the entry relating to Fargut recorded in the secret archives, and he sought him.

"Tell me all about Raoul Sapeau, the assassin and trainer of serpents?" said he.

"I'll do that. Raoul Sapeau was denounced by a police spy, whose name I do not recall."

"Jean Fargut?" said Boucharde.

"Yes, that's the name. Sapeau was a wonderful fellow, and he trained great snakes from India to do almost anything, but he was an assassin. He was a Corsican, and he had three brothers, dangerous fellows. Raoul was executed, thanks to the denunciation of Jean Fargut.

"On that occasion his three brothers vowed that Raoul should be avenged."

Thus concluded the officer's informant.

All seemed clear now as to the motive of the crime. Fargut had become the victim of a relentless Corsican vendetta. Knowing of the oath of vengeance taken by the Corsican brothers, Fargut had constructed his house to guard against them. It was, no doubt, his fear of the Corsicans that caused him never to go out unattended by Baptiste. Clearly Fargut had cause for the look of apprehension in his face. The motive for his murder was revenge.

But how had the assassin gained an entrance to M. Fargut's room? This mystery still remained.

Boucharde thought suddenly of the two scales he had found on the window-sill in the room of the murdered man.

He examined them, and then discovered that they were not fish scales, but the scales of a serpent.

The man trapper saw it all; the serpent had been induced to crawl into the room of the murdered man through the window between the iron bars.

The creature had probably been trained to attack men.

A serpent had assassinated the former police spy.

Boucharde began a search for the three Corsican brothers.

He ransacked the city of Paris. For a week he was baffled, and could not find them.

The officer began to surmise that, having consummated their revenge, they had gone to their native land.

But such was not the case, for he finally located them.

Their house was placed under surveillance.

During the absence of the Corsicans Boucharde gained an entrance, and in the room of the Corsicans he found a cage containing a large India serpent.

He examined the serpent closely, and found two large scales missing from its back.

The scales in his possession had clearly come from the serpent of the Corsicans. The method of M. Fargut's murder told that he had been crushed by a serpent. The case was complete. The same day the Corsican brothers were arrested.

Boucharde had solved the most mysterious of murder cases, and from that day his advancement was most rapid.

OLD SHOES BANK FOR $40,000.

PEOPLE have all kinds of hiding places for money. Many of the foreign population do not believe in banks. The Chinese, perhaps, are the canniest of the money hiders.

During a raid by the narcotic division of the Police Department on a Chinese opium den in Brooklyn, N. Y., the other night, the detectives were searching for hidden drugs. Detective Sergeant Sam Massam saw an old, worn pair of shoes in a corner. He picked them up. They were dusty and torn and looked as if they had not been touched in months. Inside, however, the detective found $40,000 in bills of $1,000 denomination. Turning around he showed the money to Special Deputy Commissioner Dr. Carleton Simon, who was leading the raiders. The Chinese who owned the money, one of those arrested, was the most surprised man in the world when the police turned it over to him. He had seen the detective find the money, but his face had remained stolid as that of Buddha, but on getting it back he broke into a grateful smile.

THE SALTEST LAKE.

WHEN five capitalists of Calgary bought a lake near Senlac, Canada, recently, the country people laughed. The joke was that hard-headed business men should be so foolish as to invest real money in 187 acres of water.

The lake has been known for years as the Dead Sea. Though a few miles away rich farm lands stretch on every side, the country immediately about it is a desolate, treeless prairie. Encircling it are beaches white with heavy incrustations of salt that at a distance resembles the breaking of continuous surf. In its snowy border the green lake suggests a giant emerald set in white enamel.

Boys who swim in its deep holes can lie on the surface without motion as on a feather bed, and could go to sleep comfortably if they wished. Standing upright without touching the bottom, nearly half their bodies are out of the water. Those who dive bob up to the surface like corks. It is almost impossible to sink.

Before purchasing the "worthless" pond the capitalistic quintet had the water analyzed. It contained from 52 to 55 per cent. salt. This is a salt content greater than that of the Dead Sea in Palestine and five times greater than that of the Great Salt Lake of Utah. The Saskatchewan Lake is believed to be the saltiest body of water in the world.

The new proprietors began at once to operate a solar plant on the shores to extract the salt from the water. Its output is ten tons a day.

They have begun the erection of an evaporation plant which, it is said, will increase production to 500 tons a day. The salt is the kind used for packing, refrigeration and livestock.

The lake, once regarded as worthless, will prove, it is said, a gold mine to its owners. Experts declare it containes enough salt to supply all Western Canada and make it independent of Utah, from which most of the country's salt heretofore has been imported. The lake has neither inlet nor outlet, but is fed by saline springs which well up, it is believed, from vast salt deposits deep in the earth.

The Missing Finger

By R. T. M. SCOTT

THE dark, oak-paneled library of the district attorney was a fitting place for mysterious happenings. Only the huge wood fire threw its flickering light about the room, and the shadows it cast swept with increasing size into the farthest corners. The room, too, was an old room in an old house, and the feeling of age was strong within it.

Before the fire sat John Morley, the master of the room and of the house in which it was and of much of the city in which he lived. Many feared John Morley; a few loved him; none belittled him.

The district attorney rose from his chair as a servant parted the heavy portieres to admit a visitor. In the centre of the room the hands of the two men met in a grip of strong attachment.

"You have come a long way, Jim Gardner," said the district attorney. "I am glad to see you. Is it business first or pleasure?"

"It is business, and very urgent business, John," replied the visitor. "Frank Carson," he continued and stopped.

"Dies to-morrow in the chair," added the district attorney.

For a minute both men gazed into the fire. They were beyond the half century of life, and their features showed intellectual depths far beyond the average. Gardner was the first to speak.

"I do not believe, John," he said, "that Frank Carson could commit murder."

"The evidence was damning," replied the district attorney very quietly, "although I must admit that it was circumstantial. But why are you interested in Carson?"

"For two reasons," replied Gardner. "In the first place he knows more about Oriental china than any other man in this country. In the second place he risked his life in front of a subway train to save my dog."

"And you came all the way from China on account of a dog?" asked the district attorney. "It is like you, Jim. I wish I could help you, but I am afraid it is impossible. Even if we had the execution postponed nothing would be gained without new evidence, and I am convinced that all the evidence is in. Consider the case.

"Frank Carson, an antique dealer, had been invited to inspect the famous collection of oriental china owned by Mr. Van Tuyl, a very wealthy collector of antiques. The invitation had been for nine in the evening. Carson, an old man, lived alone behind his shop. Upon the evening in question he claimed to have fallen asleep at seven o'clock in his little room behind his shop and to have slept until midnight when, having overslept his engagement with Van Tuyl, he had retired to bed. Nobody had seen him until the next morning. This was Carson's evidence.

"At midnight a servant had found Van Tuyl dead upon the floor. His head had been crushed in by means of a large Chinese vase which lay smashed upon the floor beside him. This vase had a rough surface which would not take finger-prints, but finger-prints had been found upon a priceless sang-de-boeuf jar. This jar had been taken out of its cabinet and placed upon a table as if for examination. The finger-prints it bore were those of Carson, and inside the jar itself was found the note which Carson had received from Van Tuyl. The servant who found the murdered Van Tuyl swore that at nine o'clock he had admitted a visitor who, at least, strongly resembled Carson.

"Against this evidence Carson had simply stated that he had never visited Van Tuyl at any time nor had he ever seen any of Van Tuyl's collection of china."

"The evidence, as you say, is damning," said Gardner, "but it is scarcely sufficient for a death sentence. Too many innocent people have been executed on circumstantial evidence. Carson is not going to be one more if I can help it."

"What can you do?" asked the district attorney.

"To clear up the case I have engaged a most remarkable man," replied Gardner. "Do you remember Vincent Crane, who left the police force years ago?"

"I remember him very well," replied Morley. "It was a great pity that he left the force. He was a genius. Fiction never held his equal. He retired for no apparent reason, and has never done any criminal work since. Several times we have tried to dig him out for hard cases, but he has refused large sums of money point-blank. How did you get him to take up this case?"

"I told him the story of my dog," was the quiet reply.

"Apparently it requires a genius to understand a genius," commented the district attorney. "Crane must be rather old now. Did you discover what he has been doing all these years?"

"Yes," said Gardner. "He told me something of himself. He has been studying Rosicrucianism, Theosophy and esoteric Masonry. If you will see him he is waiting outside in your hall."

"By all means," exclaimed Morley. "I had no idea you were not alone." He touched a bell. "Show in Mr. Crane," he said to a servant.

Vincent Crane entered with two companions, a man and a woman. The man was tall and catlike in his movements. The woman was small and apparently both physically and mentally of

a weak type. Vincent Crane stood out in strong contrast to both. His age might have been anything that goes with snow-white hair, and again it might have been anything that goes with a smooth skin and clear blue eyes. As he stepped forward to shake hands with the district attorney he carried with him the innocent assurance of a child together with all the dignity and gravity of what must have been his real age. It was as if he sensed himself for what he was without any shame and without any pride.

The district attorney was warm in his reception, and Vincent Crane responded in a way that showed he had not quite forgotten the old police days and the comradeship that exists among criminal investigators.

"What progress have you made?" asked Gardner anxiously.

"I expect to finish the case to-night," was the confident reply, "but you will pardon me if I commence work at once. No matter how confident we are there is not a minute to be lost when a man's life hangs in the balance."

The fire was dying down and the room was becoming more and more shadowy. Morley turned on a table light beside his chair, but Vincent Crane apologized and turned it off.

The district attorney smiled.

"We are in your hands," he said.

"I shall take you at your word, Mr. Morley," replied Crane.

At the end of the room, some distance from the fire, was a French window, before the recess of which hung heavy curtains. Crane drew back these curtains and placed a chair within the recess. He motioned to the woman, who was still standing, and directed her to sit in the chair.

The tall man who had entered with Crane had already seated himself near the portieres through which he had just stepped. Crane regarded him for a moment, and then joined the district attorney and Gardner at the fireplace. There was complete silence.

Vincent Crane stood for several minutes without speaking, his back to the fire. All in the room waited for his next action. The flickering illumination from the logs in the grate was slowly dying down. The silence and the dim light in the big room made the scene an impressive one even without a certain air of mystery that seemed to come from the white-haired Crane. There was an expectancy that all felt as they sat in the firelight which scarcely permitted the recognition of features.

"Mr. Morley," said Crane, "you may or may not have recognized the man sitting near your portieres. He is the servant who discovered the body of Mr. Van Tuyl shortly after the murder took place. He dearly loved his late master, and has come here to-night at my request so that he may answer any questions which may arise during my investigation."

John Morley, district attorney and veteran criminal investigator, simply nodded his head. He had had too much experience in criminal investigations to talk unnecessarily. Again there was silence—complete silence—while Crane stood motionless for the space of several minutes.

"Gentlemen," continued Crane, addressing the district attorney and Mr. Gardner, "whatever happens please permit me to direct affairs. Any interference on your part might cause great suffering and even death. If what transpires should appear to you as trickery remember that I shall expect you to believe nothing that is not proof to you."

"We are in your hands," reiterated the district attorney.

"Mr. Morley," continued Crane, "I know an innocent man when I look deeply into his eyes. The eye is a window of the soul. It cannot lie to the student of the soul. I have visited Frank Carson in his death cell, and I know that he is innocent. I know that he could not commit murder just as I know that you could not kill a man."

"Then you have forgotten the man I killed?" asked the district attorney.

"Ah, yes," replied Crane, "I remember now. You killed a man named Sneider, an escaped murderer whom you had convicted. You did it in self-defence. That is scarcely a fair argument."

"True," replied the district attorney, "but neither is your argument about the human eye a fair one to lay before a jury. To save Frank Carson you must explain away the finger-prints."

"Very well," replied Crane. "I will show you something that is not known to the world. I will prove that finger-prints may be made without the presence of the human body."

Again there was silence in the room while the long shadows flickered and the expectancy grew.

"The physical body," continued Crane, "is a replica of the permanent self. What we are after death is not born at death. We have it now, but it is clogged in flesh and bone. We have misnamed life and death. We are far more dead now than we will be when what we call death takes place. It is not necessary, however, to step over the grave in order to experience much of the condition of death. Sleep is a very close approximation of death conditions. While our physical replica of our permanent self lies slumbering our permanent self is free to travel considerable distance and do many things that would greatly surprise us if we could remember accurately when we awake."

In his chair the servant of the murdered man moved restlessly. Jim Gardner looked puzzled. The district attorney sat in his huge armchair with an expressionless face. For a time the white-haired man ceased speaking and shadows floated about the old room as if dead people heard their condition spoken of and came curiously near.

"Under certain conditions," continued Crane, "which I have arranged, it is possible for the free permanent self to attract sufficient physical matter—etheric substance—to become visible to the

physical eye and even to touch and move physical objects. I will endeavor to prove this to you here and now."

Vincent Crane crossed the room to the French window and drew the curtains in front of the woman seated in the chair, completely concealing her. In the far end of the room he was almost lost in the shadows. Returning to the fire, he sat down beside the district attorney and spoke very earnestly.

"Frank Carson," he continued, "was allowed a strong sleeping powder for his last night on earth. He is undoubtedly asleep, and I will attempt to bring his permanent self here to-night and prove to you that finger-prints may be made without the physical body. Behind the curtain is a materializing medium. There is nothing to do but wait. It may take ten minutes and it may take an hour. We are waiting to save a human life."

In the room there was silence, and there was gathering darkness as the fire continued to die out. Occasionally Crane glanced at the figures in the room as if studying their thoughts. Under such abnormal conditions the slightest sounds became startling.

Presently low moanings issued from the curtained window, causing the servant near the portieres to give a nervous start. Crane, however, explained in a low voice that it was merely the medium assuming the trance state and that it was natural and to be expected. Shortly after these sounds had ceased he spoke again in a voice just audible throughout the room.

"Observe the floor at the bottom of the curtains," he said.

Close to the floor could be seen what appeared to be a small ball of very faint luminous quality. Gradually it grew in strength and rose several feet from the floor, appearing to pass in and out of the curtains without moving them. There was, however, very little light, and it was difficult to see exactly what was happening. Gardner and the district attorney leaned forward and watched with keen interest. Soon they saw a shadowy substance issuing from the closed curtains and gradually shaping itself into a figure.

"If it's conjuring," muttered the district attorney, "it's the best I've seen."

The figure appeared more clearly and showed the wavering form of a man.

"John Morley! John Morley!" came a rather indistinct voice out of that part of the room occupied by the medium.

"Who are you?" demanded Crane.

"Sneider," came the voice again, "the man he killed."

"Do you recognize him?" asked Crane, turning to the district attorney.

"Not exactly," replied Morley. "Everything is too vague."

Swiftly Vincent Crane moved to a writing table and took from it an ink pad and a sheet of the district attorney's private note paper. Crossing over to the shadowy figure he grasped a whitish hand and held it while he spoke a few low-toned words which were not sufficiently distinct to be understood by the men at the fireplace. The firelight was very weak, and in the deep shadows it was almost impossible to tell the real from the unreal. As they stood there one figure grew slowly fainter and fainter until it disappeared. Then Crane returned to the table and turned up the light upon it. Into the soft circle of light thrown upon the table by the reading lamp he dropped the district attorney's monogrammed note paper. On it were three distinct finger-prints.

"I am sorry that we did not get Carson," said Crane. "These things are sometimes very hard to manage. However, although Sneider is dead, you must have his finger-prints on record. Order them sent up here. If they match these it must convince you at least that it is possible to make finger-prints without the presence of the physical body. I thought that I got all four fingers, but apparently I missed one."

John Morley seized the paper in sudden excitement and examined it closely.

"By heavens!" he exclaimed. "This is astounding. The centre and longest finger has made no print. Sneider lost that finger from his right hand in an accident. This is worth looking into."

The district attorney reached for a telephone upon the table and called police headquarters.

"Get Sneider's finger-prints up here on the jump," he ordered, "and send a man who can read prints."

Meanwhile Crane walked over to the French window and drew aside the curtains. The medium was sitting straight in her chair and trembling a little. He soothed her until she became calm. Then he led her to a chair near the fire, where she sat obediently without speaking.

"Mr. Morley," said Crane, "while your finger-prints are arriving I am going to use another occult art to show you exactly how the murder was committed. I visited the scene of the tragedy to-day and managed to pick up a small piece of the Chinese vase with which the fatal blow was struck. Like our physical bodies this bit of porcelaine is but the replica of something which exists in the superphysical world. Otherwise its existence in our world would not be possible. The permanent self of the murderer has contracted the superphysical counterpart of this fragment of the fatal vase. In doing this the murderer has left behind him the evidence of his guilt. I am going to give this fragment to the medium. She will tell us by means of psychometry just what happened."

Pressing something into the woman's hand Crane first stroked her forehead several times and then resumed his seat by the fire. After several minutes of silence, the medium spoke in a weak, piping voice of high pitch.

"I see curious buildings and Chinese faces," she said.

"Continue," directed Crane.

"I see ships and the waves of the sea," added the medium.

Again there was silence, which lasted into minutes. The strain of the materialization scene continued to increase as the shadows deepened with the dying fire. Even the district attorney gripped his chair arms, although his face was expressionless. The servant near the portieres crouched forward in his chair and edged a bit away from the dark hangings as if he would like to be nearer the friendly firelight. An increasing nervousness of expectation held the group as the silence continued, and when the piping voice of the medium came again there was a slight movement of alarm by all except Vincent Crane, who sat peering about him as if there were things to see which are not seen in strong light.

"I see the doorway of a small antique shop," came the high-pitched voice once more. "It is evening and a tall man enters. It is dark, and the visitor gropes his way into a back room, where he finds an old man asleep on a couch. He does not waken the sleeping man, but returns to the shop and picks up a red jar which he carries to the door to examine. He wraps it in some paper and leaves the shop steathily, taking the parcel with him. I see him in city streets and entering a great house. In the hall he is stopped by a man in evening clothes. The two go into a room where there are many cases of china. The man in evening clothes points to a cabinet which is open and partly empty. The tall man shakes his head, but he is questioned about the parcel under his arm and made to open it. The man in evening clothes points accusingly at the red jar, and bends to examine it. As he does so the tall man seizes a heavy vase and lifts it in the air. I—can—see——"

Suddenly the figure of the servant leaped from his chair and dashed through the heavy portieres. With the speed of an athlete the old man was across the floor and after him, but there was no need for Vincent Crane to act. There was a commotion beyond the curtains, and a police sergeant entered, dragging with him the runaway servant.

"This man was going too fast to be honest, sir," said the sergeant to the district attorney. "I thought it better to bring him back."

With the lights full on it was seen that the servant was trembling and ashy pale. Crane approached him and forced him to look up until their eyes met. For an instant he held him so, as if hypnotically.

"And you would send an innocent man to his death to pay for your crime?" demanded Crane.

The man cringed before the words, but was silent.

"Look!" commanded Crane of the medium, at the same time turning the man's face in her direction with no gentle force.

"It is the man I saw," replied the woman.

"And it is the man who killed Van Tuyl," continued Crane.

Then, forcing the man into the strong glare of a near-by light, the white-haired man continued, while his clear blue eyes seemed to bore their way into the eyes of his victim.

"You struck the blow that killed," he went on. "You were caught as a thief, and you struck to escape, but you struck too hard. Will you confess?" The vibrant voice rose with increasing energy. "Must I call back the dead man himself to accuse you?"

The servant gazed wildly about him.

"No! No!" he suddenly shrieked. "Don't bring him back! I killed him, but I can't bear to see him again. Don't! Don't!"

Vincent Crane turned to the district attorney.

"My work is done," he said. "You have the murderer."

Slowly Crane walked to the table and picked up the sheet of paper bearing the mysterious fingerprints just as the sergeant handed a large envelope to the district attorney.

"This must be the record of Sneider's fingerprints," said the district attorney. "Let us compare them. It will be most interesting."

"It would be a pity, Mr. Morley," returned Crane, "to destroy the infallibility of fingerprints. It would do more harm than good in this age."

Very carefully Vincent Crane dropped his sheet of paper into the fire.

When John Morley and Jim Gardner were again alone, they sat for a long time in silence. Their faces were very grave.

"How much of it all was real?" asked Gardner.

"I do not know," replied Morley, "but when I shook hands just now with Crane I noticed that his centre and longest finger was the only one that was not smudged with ink from my ink pad. It was, at least, a beautiful third degree."

NEGRO SUPERSTITION.

AN old negro superstition was successfully brought into play near Corsicana, Texas, a few days ago, much to the surprise of the doubting white men who witnessed the occurrence. James Robertson, a negro, fell into Chambers Creek and was drowned.

All efforts to recover his body by ordinary means proved futile. An aged negro drove up and told the searching party to go to the dead negro's home, get a shirt that the man had worn and throw the shirt into the creek. He said that the shirt would sink to the bottom when it reached the point above where the dead body rested,

As a last resort the shirt was obtained and cast into the creek. It floated downstream a short distance and then disappeared. Grappling hooks were sunk to the bed of the stream at that point and the body of the negro was brought up.

The Lawyer's Stratagem

By FENTON BLACKWELL

"YOU cannot have my daughter!" said old Foster, banging his fist on the table with a crash. "There's no use talking, young man. I am determined you shan't have her!"

"At least you'll tell me why," insisted the young lawyer's clerk, who had just made application for the hand of the old gentleman's only daughter. "What do you know against me, sir?"

"For the matter of that, nothing in particular," replied Felix Foster. "But I'm a solid man. I have made money, and I want to lay that money in a warm nest. Now, if I give my girl to a poor fellow like you, when she comes in for what I leave her, you'll spend it instead of doubling it. Besides, you're too young—not six-and-twenty. And there's my old friend Frisbee, five-and-fifty, owns his block of houses and a hundred-acre farm, a factory, and forty workmen's cottages. You ought to have sense enough to see that he is the man for Agatha."

"But if Agatha likes me best?" pleaded young Bloom.

"Stuff and nonsense! She'll like who I tell her to," replied Mr. Foster, whose grammar was not his strong point. "And as I've an appointment at two, I'll say good-by to you, young man."

At this hint John Bloom bowed himself out of the contractor's office.

He intended to marry Agatha Foster. He did not care for her fortune, and he knew she hated the elderly suitor whom her father favored.

"Elope with me, Agatha," he pleaded under the side window of her father's house before that gentleman came in to tea. "Elope with me. We are both of age. Let us defy everybody!"

"I suppose dad would forgive me in time," said Agatha; "but I can't go without my things. I have a very nice wardrobe, and lots of jewelry and things; and I want to be married decently, and have some one to take away my clothes; but how can I do it, when all day long, from the time pa goes out, old James Davids, his watchman, walks outside, pledged to lock me up in my own room if I set foot beyond the door."

"Is he?" said the lawyer's clerk sarcastically, and ran away.

"Mind you, Davids," said Foster, as he buttoned his overcoat in the hall—"mind you, don't desert your post. No going out, and no coming in. That girl of mine has no mother, and I've got to be both parents to her. Don't let so much as a letter be carried in at the door."

"No, your honor; not whilst I'm alive," said Davids.

But, alas! who can calculate upon circumstances?

Solemn James Davids, sitting all evening in the hall-chair, the object of the detestation of all the female servants, opened the door on a crack to all applicants, slipping letters into his own pockets, and keeping the house free from intruders, though himself invulnerable; but his weak spot had been discovered by his enemy.

It was a bad boy.

At five o'clock a ring came to the door, which answering, he found no one there.

Another and another followed.

"It's a boy as runs and hides himself," said Davids, peering up and down the street. "The next ring I'll catch him," and he waited with his back against the door. The ring came; out bolted Davids, down the street; peered into areas; peeped around the corner; found no boy, and was about to return to the house when a hand caught his coat-collar. "Help!" roared a voice. "Help! Thieves! Police!"

"Let me be," shouted Davids. "What do you catch hold of me for?"

"You've got my pocket-book," cried the young man. "If you haven't, you have thrown it away. I missed it as you ran past me. Officer," this to a policeman who had speedily arrived, "I want this man arrested. I've lost my pocket-book."

And so, amid his protestations, that respectable old person, James Davids, was hushed, pulled, and dragged to the nearest police-station, followed by a crowd of ragamuffins, and there locked up for the night.

And that young man who had lost his pocket-book, and who was to appear against him the next morning, looked suspiciously like the young lawyer's clerk, Jack Bloom, who, of course, knew that one against whom a charge was made must be arrested, even if he was able to prove himself entirely innocent next day.

And who came to the door in a taxi half an hour after but this same young Bloom; and who got into it but Agatha Foster; and where did they drive but to the registrar's, where they were married.

And Betsy Jane, and Sarah, and Ellen Maria all helped to carry down the trunks, bags, and parcels with which the car was heavily loaded, so that when, at seven o'clock, old Mr. Foster rung at his own bell, Betsy Jane opened the door, meek-faced and tidy, while all the other servants listened at the foot of the kitchen stairs.

"Where's Davids?" asked Mr. Foster.

"Please, sir, a p'liceman arrested him a while

ago for picking a gentleman's pocket," said Betsy.

"Davids pick a pocket! Nonsense! He never did it!" roared Mr. Foster.

"No, sir. I suppose not, sir," said Betsy.

"And where's Miss Agatha?" asked Mr. Foster.

"Gone for a ride, sir."

"Where? Who with?"

"Please, sir, I don't know where. With a real nice young gentleman, with black mustaches, sir," replied Betsy demurely.

For an hour or two the neighbors all wondered what had happened at Foster's, and cook said she wondered the roof did not fall in, for she never heard such language.

And the return of Davids, with his account of false arrest and imprisonment, did not mend matters.

But Agatha was right, after all.

In a few months the old gentleman felt that he could not do without his girl, and finally wrote her a letter which re-established the happiness of the family.

1,000-ROOM CLIFF DWELLINGS.

WHEN Europe was plunging through the terrors of the Middle Ages and along about the time Attila, the Hun, was ravaging the civilization of Rome, another civilization of a different type was in a fairly well perfected state in Western North America. The center of this civilization as well as center of trade and commerce was Pecos, N. M., about 25 miles east of Santa Fe.

This was determined definitely, according to Dr. A. V. Kidder, by excavations conducted by himself and assistants last summer. The scientists opened more than 300 graves and examined some 1,000 skeletons. Homes had been built upon ruins of previous habitations and the bodies of the dead buried in the ruins had increased to such an extent that the Indians of Pecos, some 80 years ago, deserted their thousand-year-old city and moved to Jemez because the waters had become contaminated.

Cliff dwellings of a thousand rooms, well preserved specimens of the past civilization and unusual examples of early day pottery and household utensils were recovered, according to the report on the excavations recently made public.

Castenada, the chronicler of Coronado's explorations 380 years ago, mentions but one pueblo at Pecos, obviously the north house. Excavations last summer showed that there had been a pueblo at an early period, on the site of the south house, which had been abandoned and reduced to a mere heap of ruins before the coming of the Spaniards. In the interior of the mound there was uncovered one ground floor chamber in excellent preservation. Its roof was almost intact; from the beams still hung the bark loops that had been used to suspend goods of the owners, and on one smoke-blackened log are a series of handprints, large and small, slapped on in whitewash.

To explore the extensive north house which originally must have had more than a thousand rooms, and walls of which still stand almost three stories high, trenches were started simultaneously at the east entrance and the west edge of the mesa. The western trench was run along bed rock and after passing through burials four feet deep, encountered the foundation walls of an early building, the presence of which had not been suspected. This was cut through and the trench struck a large oval pit which proved to be a treasure house 15 feet deep, 10 feet wide and 20 feet long, built in a natural crevice in the mesa. About its edge was a neatly made coping wall two feet high and it resembled somewhat the cenotes at Chichen Itza and elsewhere in the Maya field in Yucatan. The cistern yielded an unusually full and unmixed collection of artifacts and pottery from the earliest times to the pajaritan, or fourth glaze period. When the cistern was cleared it was bridged over and the trench was continued. Another zone of skeletons was discovered and some of the best pottery thus far found was taken from the graves.

Other trenches revealed a large series of cooking jars, painted oilas and one nest of ceremonial pots wedged between rocks and yet quite undamaged. With these were many handsome shell ornaments, two sets of bone flutes, two very large tobacco pipes, one of them elaborately carved, 36 buffalo horns, part of a wooden dance headdress and many other specimens.

In one place were found two underground kivas, or ceremonial chambers. Both were built in the earliest time, about the beginning of the Christian era, one of them later serving as a burial place.

By careful observation of the stratified fillings in the lower part of the rooms, co-ordinated with an intensive study of the successive increments of masonry that had gone into their construction, Dr. Guthe had been able to work out and record by plans and elevations the exact history of the growth of this section of the pueblo from the foundation of the town, perhaps 2,000 years ago, down to the time of its abandonment about 80 years ago. Pecos apparently is the longest continuously inhabited city of the American continent.

The Museum of New Mexico owns the site excavated.

Current News

THE "RAIN OF BLOOD"

A curious phenomena of south France and Italy occurred recently at Monte Carlo and Mentone. After the downpour ceased the roofs, roads, gardens and shrubs of the Riviera were covered with sticky crimson. The superstitious inhabitants of the gambling metropolis were much terrified. There is, however, a scientific explanation which is perfectly satisfactory. It is that the rain clouds had been saturated with red sand from the Sahara Desert.

MAN OF MYSTERY DIES

B. W. Goodsell died in Chicago, Feb. 19, as he had lived—a man of mystery. He was worth $75,000, but lived frugally.

His home was a small rear room at the Morrison Hotel. He was an inventor, and those familiar with his inventions say he was a genius. Most of them in recent years were motor accessories. He is said to have contributed more improvements to perfect the automobile than any other man in America.

Dr. F. W. Jiroch diagnosed the case as ptomaine poisoning. His diet was canned food—soup, beans, peas and concentrated beef extracts. A can of sardines was found opened, and it is believed they were tainted. He left no relatives.

WHERE'S DAD?

A strange story comes from Pengam, Monmouthshire, England, of the recovery of a young girl who, it was believed, was dead and for whose burial preparations were being made.

The girl had been ill with lung trouble. On the third day after her supposed death, when the coffin was brought to the house, a light was taken into the room, whereupon the girl immediately sat up and asked:

"Where is dad!"

The father rushed into the room and carried the girl to her mother. She is now recovering.

It was recently reported from the same village that a woman who had been blind for twenty years had "miraculously" regained her sight.

HOW TO REALIZE WHAT A MILLION IS

Although we often speak of millions of dollars and millions in population few realize what a million of anything looks like.

An idea of the impressiveness of a million can be gained by looking at the stars visible, yet as a matter of fact there are never more than 8,000 visible to the naked eye at one time.

The simplest way to conceive of a million is to think of it in terms of time. For instance, there have not been a million days since the founding of Rome, long before the birth of Christ. A million days ago would take us back to early in the year 817 B. C.

A million hours are 114 years, 29 days and 4 hours. This was almost as far back as the battle of Trafalgar and was before the invention of the steamboat or the printing machine.

PHANTOM HERD FOUND

The phantom herd of the North has been found. For years a tradition of a great herd of buffalo somewhere in the Mackenzie River basin has lingered among the fur posts. Indians told of sighting it blackening the wild pastures of remote valleys. No white men had seen it. But trappers had chanced upon its tramped trails and ten years ago two mighty bulls that had straggled far from their fellows were killed.

F. H. Kitto, engineer of the natural resources branch of the Department of the Interior, who has returned from five months of explorations in the Mackenzie country, reports that he was the herd and estimates it at 1,000 head. He received reports, he says, from Indians that another herd equally as large exists further north.

Canada has the largest bison herd in the world in the National Park at Wainright. Jan. 1 it numbered 4,335. With the exception of ninety animals that still live in untamed freedom in the northern fastnesses of Yellowstone Park the Mackenzie River herds are the only wild buffalo left on the continent.

COLORED LIGHTS WE SEE WITH EYES SHUT

When you shut your eyes, especially if you press upon them, you will see blotches of light, more or less vivid and changing in color as the moments pass. Several names have been given to these, among them being "phosphenes," "light dust" and "ocular spectra." The Popular Science Monthly says these are "probably caused by the ever-varying modifications that occur in the circulation of the blood in the retina, or by the slight pressure of the eyeball upon the retina when the closed lid is pressed against the front of the eye.

"That these spectra may be stimulus for dream-pictures seems plausible. One investigator, gradually awaking with the dream picture before him, watched it dissolve into phosphenes and melt into the colored spots perceived by the closed eyes.

"The circulation of the blood in the closed eyelid may also make images that serve as stimuli for dream pictures when a little light falls on the eyelids."

WIFE FINDS $100

The deliberations of Magistrate Douras in Harlem Court, New York, were interrupted the other day by the sudden appearance of a woman, who ran down the aisle waving a roll of greenbacks at him.

"Hey, Judge, stop a minute!" she shouted.

"What's the idea?" said the magistrate.

"I just found this $100 under my husband's pillow. I'm Mrs. Brotal. My old man wasn't robbed at all."

The case of the alleged disappearance of $100 from the pocket of Isidor Brotal, 215 East 100th street, was before the court. Brotal accused his friend, Ernest Leguna, of picking his pocket after a New Year's party at Brotal's home. Leguna was held in $1,000 bail.

After apologies had been tendered and accepted complainant and defendant walked out of the court room arm in arm.

ANGEL CURED

Unexpectedly meeting an Angel, clad in white and armed with a lance, cured Edgar Peters of an attack of hiccoughs recently.

Peters, thirty-two years old, who resides at No. 714 Spruce street, was seized with an attack of hiccoughs at the dinner table recently. When the attack did not cease after several hours, he went to the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa.

Waiting for the arrival of a surgeon for nearly a half hour Peters was nervously pacing the floor of the receiving ward, when Dr. Angel, a resident physician, entered unexpectedly, still garbed in a white operating gown and carrying a surgeon's lance.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the surgeon of Peters.

"Nothing," replied the other. "I came here to be cured of the hiccoughs, and I'm cured. Happy New Year!" And he left.

Physicians explained that fright or sudden surprise will often cure an attack of hiccoughs.

A CLOCK BUILT OF STRAW

From Switzerland, the home of the watch and clock industry, comes the description of a clock made entirely of straw and willow withes. Of course there is no particular value in the use of this material, except to demonstrate the ingenuity of the clockmaker. In this clock there is not a single piece of metal. Even the chimes are made of straw put through a special process, so as to give them a ringing tone when struck. Instead of the ordinary swinging pendulum, this clock is provided with a see-saw movement, there being two weights on each side. One great difficulty in making the interior mechanism of the clock was to get the proper elasticity in the springs, which were pressed and turned into coils very much resembling Chinese bamboo. The clock is nine feet high with a face eighteen inches in diameter. The base is of wicker construction from which four heavy linked straw chains serve as guys to keep the clock properly balanced. The movement operates twenty-four hours on each winding. It took over thirty months to complete the clock.

RIVAL TO MAMMOTH CAVE

It is believed that the discovery of a great cavern in Hart County, Ky., which may rival Mammoth Cave, will result in a general exploration of caves all over the State in the hope of finding remains of pre-historic people. Mummies have been found in Mammouth Cave, and a skeleton was in the cave discovered in Hart County.

Prof. A. M. Miller, geologist and archaeologist at the University of Kentucky, said the other night that caves and "frock houses" in the Kentucky cliffs were used for burial of early peoples, and he believes relics of prehistoric man would be found. He disagrees with Dr. E. W. Berry of Johns Hopkins University who claimed there was no evidence of early peoples buying their dead in caves.

There are over 1,000 caves in Kentucky, situated in every part of the State. Lexington itself is built over one.

"TALKING GIRL" TALKS SELF OUT AFTER WEEK

Miriam Rubin, of Waukegan, Ill., the eight-year-old "talking girl" who has been talking steadily for a week and a half, is at last showing signs that she has talked herself out.

The other afternoon she slept soundly for three hours and a half and later her conversation trailed off into a normal taciturn sleep at about half past 10.

Dr. Paul Berger said he expected that Miriam will be a normal child again within two weeks more.

When Miriam awakened she sat up in bed with her doll, ate strawberries and cream and answered questions in a manner that convinced her mother and father and the attending physician that her mind was functioning normally.

"Why did you talk all the time?" asked her mother.

"Because, mamma, I just felt that I wanted to talk," the child answered.

"Did you receive as many valentines as you sent away?"

"Oh, yes, I got lots more than I sent."

"Has the dog been in the room here this morning?"

"Why, no; he must be outside. Better bring me some more strawberries, mamma. I got to give Dolly her breakfast."

Miriam is said to be stronger and more refreshed after her sleep than at any time during her talking sickness.

ONE POUND OF AIR QUITE A BIG THING

Textbooks tell us that a pound of pure carbon (the preponderating element in coal) requires the oxygen contained in 11.6 pounds of air to complete its combustion. Few of us have any idea what 11.6 pounds of air means. The Popular Science Monthly brings it home to us as follows:

"Imagine a column of air one inch square extending forty miles into the sky and you will have a good idea of the amount of air required to burn a single pound of coal. A pound of coal would occupy a column one inch square and only three feet high.

PILOT-FISH GETS RIDES FOR NOTHING.

Sailors have a saying that where the shark is the pilot-fish will be found. The pilot-fish, or shark-sucker, as it is often called, attaches itself to the surface of other fish by means of a sucking disk. The pilot-fish, however, does no "piloting," though it certainly does suggest to the nautical mind a brisk little pilot-boat bringing a big ship to port. Apparently it merely desires to have a comfortable resting place, or at most to get a free ride, like the small boy "hanging behind."

The pilot-fish seems especially fond of attaching itself to sharks and turtles, but when these are not at hand it hangs to any convenient object. This characteristic has led to the curious custom among some primitive tribes of employing a sucker-fish as a live fishhook (not bait) for catching other fish or turtle. A metal ring is placed around the tail of the sucker-fish so that a line can be fastened to it. The fish is then thrown over and at once darts away to the nearest refuge, which is apt to be a large turtle that has been sighted by the fisherman. When the turtle is reached the sucker-fish attaches its disk against the side of the animal, which is then drawn in by means of the line. As soon as the turtle or shark is drawn above the waterline the sucker-fish drops back into the water and seeks another host.—Illustrated World.

FRUIT JUICES AS MOUTH CLEANSERS

It is an accepted fact among those who have studied mouth hygiene for many years that fruit acids are ideal cleaners of the mouth and teeth, writes Dr. Albert Westlake in the Medical Record. The canned tomato with its sweet acid juice is a splendid stimulant to the mucous membrane and salivary glands of the mouth, and is also a notable antiscorbutic when swallowed. Vinegar, produced from either wine or cider, when well diluted with water, is an excellent mouth and teeth cleaner. Tooth pastes and dentifrices are not as popular in Italy, Spain and France as in the United States.

The first action in the mouth of the above by-products of the fruits or of the citric fruit acids stimulates a copious flow of alkaline saliva, which holds a full proportion of ptyalin as a medium to convert the starchy foods remaining on or between the teeth into maltose—a form of sugar which readily washes away with the saliva. Clinging particles of meat may annoy one and are summarily removed, but the dangerous starches from bread and soft foods adhere without warning between the teeth and about the gum margins. If not promptly removed the food residue will generate ammonia in the breath, which will cause the lime salts of the saliva to be precipitated as irritants.

HEART BEATS 8 YEARS IN GLASS JAR

Dr. Alexis Carrel, who is to sail for France soon, will leave at the Rockefeller Institute laboratories one of the surgical marvels of the age. It is the heart of a chicken that never lived, although its heart, which was removed from the embryo in 1912, still beats and adds to its tissue in a special container at the laboratories. The organ has been nourished artificially for eight years.

Long before the World War Dr. Carrel startled scientists with the announcement that he had kept portions of animals' hearts alive for months while immersed in a special antiseptic solution, and that these portions, after a comparatively short time, surrounded themselves with living cells and grew to more than sixty times their original size.

When the war took the famous surgeon to France, not to return except on brief trips until 1919, it was supposed that his experiments were abandoned. Information now available shows that under Dr. Carrel's direction the embryo chicken heart which began its life eight years ago has been regularly fed and cared for until at present the scientist has gone further than ever to prove the possibility of his claim to immortality for individual living tissues.

Dr. Carrel was awarded the Nobel prize in 1912 in recognition of his surgical achievements, notably the transportation of blood vessels. He had successfully interchanged the main artery and jugular vein of a man, without bad result, and had grafted the leg of a dead fox terrier on to the body of a living terrier.

On January 17, 1912, Dr. Carrel began his experiments with the heart of an embryo chick. This tiny bit of life was placed in a test tube and after two years the tissue cells had multiplied actively to produce a large amount of connecting tissue. At the beginning of the third year experiments showed that its proliferating power had increased instead of diminished.

At this time Dr. Carrel announced in scientific circles:

"The fact remains that during the third year of independent life the connective tissues shows greater activity than at the beginning of that period and is no longer subject to the influence of time. If we exclude accidents, connective tissue cells may proliferate indefinitely.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:

NO.

28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trailed by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
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44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
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48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
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59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by Caroline Bingold.
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61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
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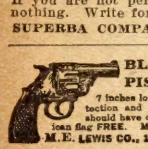

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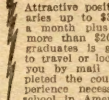

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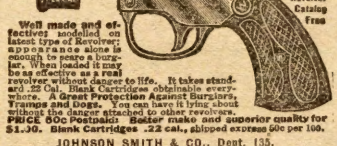

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Accidental discharge impossible, and safest, quickest firing. When you need a pistol you need it bad and quick, as every second counts. Be prepared to defend. You should have one; there is no better or safer made.

Price by insured mail $5.00 Big Catalog Free.

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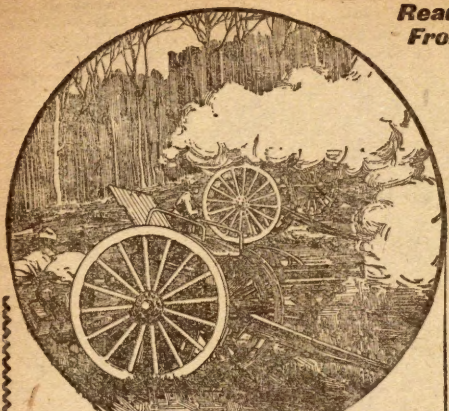
INITIAL RAILROAD OUT OF CHICAGO.

The first railroad to get charter out of Chicago was the Galena and Chicago Union. It was chartered on January 16, 1836, and work on it was at once begun. The object of this road was to increase the value of real estate at both points. Galena being then a leading village of the West, obtained precedence in the naming of the road. Just two days after the incorporation of Galena and Chicago Union Railroad the Illinois Central Railroad was incorporated. The fifty-eight incorporators failed to do anything, and the project collapsed. It was revived by its immense land grant in September, 1850. The Galena and Chicago Union Railroad was revived in 1846, and by November 21st, 1848, the engine was running on the ten miles of completed road west of Chicago, conveying materials and laborers to carry on the work. On November 20, 1848, Chicago received its first wheat transported by rail. In December, 1850, the Galena and Chicago Union was completed to Elgin, Ill., forty-two miles, and was the first railroad out of Chicago. By September 4, 1853, this road was 121 miles long.



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A Real Moving Picture Show In Your Own Home

Remember, this is a Genuine Moving Picture Machine and the motion pictures are clear, sharp and distinct.

The Moving Picture Machine is finely constructed, and carefully put together by skilled workmen. It is made of Russian Metal, has a beautiful finish, and is operated by a finely constructed mechanism, consisting of an eight wheel movement, etc. The projecting lenses are carefully ground and adjusted, triple polished, standard double extra reflector, throwing a ray of light many feet, and enlarging the picture on the screen up to three or four feet in area.

It is not a toy; it is a solidly constructed and durable Moving Picture Machine. The mechanism is exceedingly simple and is readily operated by the most inexperienced. The pictures shown by this marvelous Moving Picture Machine are not the common, crude and lifeless Magic Lantern variety, but are life-like photographic reproductions of actual scenes, places and people, which never tire its audiences. This Moving Picture Machine has caused a rousing enthusiasm wherever it is used.

This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

Read These Letters From Happy Boys:

Shows Clear Pictures

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

Sold His for $10.00 and Ordered Another

Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

Would Not Give Away for $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Bresky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

Better Than a $12.00 Machine

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.

How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as *"Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"*—*"Washington at Home,"*—*"Battle of Lake Erie," etc.* I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 40-cent offer among the people you know. When you have disposed of the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $8.00. Send the $8.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

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615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 142, New York

PLEASE USE COUPON

Free Coupon

Good for Moving Picture Offer

Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once. Address

A. E. FLEMING, Secy.,
615 W. 43d St., Dept. 142, New York

ODD NOTES

At the age of 54, Mrs. E. L. Lyons of San Diego, Cal., is a great-grandmother.

* * *

The number of women students tending German universities has increased nearly fourfold during the past decade.

* * *

Children are not allowed in the streets of Norway after dark.

* * *

It is a serious offense to ride a bicycle anywhere near the city of Constantinople.

* * *

Teak, during the reign of the Burmese kings, was the royal wood, and the king had a right to all teak.

* * *

It is believed that more fish are found off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland than in any other part of the world.

* * *

If a horse ate as much as a caterpillar, in proportion to its size, it would consume a ton of hay every twenty-four hours.

* * *

The wet flat lands of Ecuador produce a vine yielding a fruit which, when dried, forms a sponge superior to those obtained from the sea.

* * *

An authority on finance, after exhaustive investigation, has discovered that in America only one rich man's son in seventeen dies rich.

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A Weekly Magazine Devoted to Photoplays and Players.

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